

Risks of Telehealth Check List

Whether you are seeing your patients in person, or via a telehealth consult, the same obligations of reasonable care and skill in providing health services apply.

The following checklists are designed to help you prepare your practice and practitioners for conducting telehealth consultations.

PRACTICE READY CHECKLIST	
<i>This checklist is designed to consider the broader practice and business considerations of offering telehealth consults.</i>	
Practice Considerations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered which services are appropriate to offer through telehealth?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do our proposed telehealth consultation services suit the needs of our clients?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered relationships with other health care providers? <i>If two healthcare providers are consulting with one patient at once</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered whether any practitioners require training to gain the technical knowledge to conduct telehealth consultations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do we have an appropriate workspace to provide telehealth services from? <i>Ensure that the workspace is quiet, private, has good lighting, access to a phone as back-up and has systems in place to prevent interruptions (such as signage).</i>
Risk Management	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we reviewed our insurance policies and/or, made contact with our insurers, (including professional indemnity insurance) ensuring that we are covered to provide telehealth services?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered whether any jurisdictional limits to where the services can be provided?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If we are operating across different states/ territories, have we checked and identified any legislative requirements that apply to the provision of our services in other states and territories?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we provided patients with access to information about the telehealth services in order to give informed consent?
Occupational Health and Safety	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do we have an appropriate workplace to provide telehealth services, and have we checked if the workplace is safe (even though it is their home)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do we have a self-assessment policy or procedure in place to ensure a self-assessment of the suitability of the workplace (own home) is conducted?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the equipment being used been satisfactorily tested and tagged?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we checked with our insurer about whether we need to declare remote workers addresses?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do our OH&S Policies complement our remote work policy, ensuring the continued safety of our staff? Do we need to make any amendments to these policies?
Privacy & Confidentiality	
<i>Your practice must comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and Health Records state based legislation</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does our Privacy Policy address telehealth consultations?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do our current policies, procedures and risk management protocols include provisions for securely storing of video recordings, images and teleconferencing in accordance with the provisions of Australian Privacy Principle 11?</p> <p><i>Australian Privacy Principle 11 pertains to the security of personal information and the requirement to take reasonable steps to protect the security of that information. As telehealth providers, we need to take reasonable steps to secure personal information in an online context.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Are there security and privacy controls in place to discharge the obligation to take reasonable steps to protect data?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have a policy for collection and scanning of mail, sending scripts and the like?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have adequate policies and procedures in place to deal with sensitive (paper-based) information at individual residences, maintaining client confidentiality?</p>
Cyber Security	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Security of data is paramount consideration in evaluating the means by which telehealth is conducted, is this addressed in our Privacy Policy?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have policies and procedures in place in the event of a Notifiable Data breach?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have an IT Policy & Protocols to deal with cyber security?</p> <p><i>In times of emergency these can be overlooked - this is when criminals are at their most prolific!</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have cyber security insurance?</p> <p><i>If not, get some today but beware not all policies are the same – use a broker you trust or ask a lawyer to check the policy wording.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do both the client and us have access to a secure internet connection?</p>
Equipment & Technology	
<i>Consider engaging expert IT consultants to assist you in establishing your telehealth practice</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have adequate equipment and software suitable for telehealth services?</p> <p><i>Use high quality equipment where possible to ensure quality and reliability of consults. Important that clear communication is established allowing accurate transfer of clinical information.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>What arrangements are in place to provide practitioners with access to the equipment and software required by the practitioner to conduct telehealth consultations?</p> <p><i>If the practitioners are expected to have their own equipment, then this should be reviewed and monitored.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Does the telehealth equipment comply with regulations for electronic storage and transmission of client data?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have a back-up plan if there is a failure?</p> <p><i>Know the limits of technology. Plan for detecting, diagnosing and fixing equipment problems.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>What arrangements will we have in place for securing any recording that may be made?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Is the equipment for telehealth services compatible with the equipment used by the patient and the practitioner?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Is the equipment for telehealth services and the network secure, and of high enough quality to facilitate good communication and accurate transfer of information?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do we have a strategy in place to ensure that all telehealth related software, equipment and systems remain fully operational and function as required?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Have we contacted our IT provider to ascertain if and how they can provide support and assist us with this transition?</p> <p><i>We should confirm if they experts in cloud-based technologies.</i></p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we updated our software to ensure compliance with recently updated MBS items?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a troubleshooting guide, or other way of assisting the patient with technical difficulties?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the practitioner familiar with the company policies with respect to the maintenance of software and equipment?
Medicare & Billing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicare has updated the MBS for health practitioners to claim telehealth consults. Have we read and understood the new MBS items? https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/news/new-mbs-telehealth-items-coronavirus
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do we have a clear billing policy about Medicare and bulk billing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered how we will obtain informed financial consent from the patient about any out of pocket costs for telehealth?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered how we will collect payment from the patient following a telehealth conference?

CONSULT CHECKLIST	
<i>This checklist is designed to ensure that every telehealth consult meets the standards expected by your patient and the regulator</i>	
Telehealth services environment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the practitioner confirmed that room is suitable for telehealth consultations including relevant privacy concerns?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the practitioner have access to pre-approved software and equipment to access the practice's computer system and to conduct telehealth consultations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the practitioner completed any necessary telehealth practitioner training?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the practitioner performed a pre-test of telehealth software and equipment?
Patient environment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the practitioner made a judgement about the appropriateness of a telehealth consultation (being a technology-based patient consultation) and in particular, whether a direct physical examination is necessary? <i>If any patient is deemed to be seriously ill, they must be referred to their local hospital for treatment and will not be suitable for a telehealth consultation.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the patient been asked suitable patient screening questions at the time of the booking and do the answers given satisfy the requirements that deem the patient suitable for a telehealth conference?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we identified ourselves as well as verified the identity of the patient and anyone else in attendance at the beginning of a telehealth consultation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we informed the patient of the need to be in a room suited to telehealth (eg. adequate lighting and space)? Before commencing the practitioner should advise the patient of the need to be in a quiet area to ensure that the patient will not be disturbed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we provided an explanation to the patient of what to expect from a telehealth consultation and the process involved?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we informed the patient of the hardware required at the patient's end to make the consultation viable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How will we assist our clients with technical difficulties that may arise during a consultation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we maintained the patient rights including choices, culturally appropriate care, education and relevant consents at all times?
Confidentiality	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your patient in a private and confidential location?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are other people in the room with them? If not, is the patient comfortable with these people in the room?
Privacy	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inform the patient about privacy considerations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we obtained the patient's consent to receive a telehealth service? <i>Ensuring that the patient fully understands what telehealth entails and how it will be used.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	If we are sending information overseas, have we obtained specific consent to overseas (cross border) transfer of information? <i>Ensure that prior to giving consent, patients are advised of where the information is being sent, the privacy protection laws in that country and that by giving such consent the patient may not have any recourse under Australian privacy law.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that we only collect information we need to deliver the service
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request the patient does not record the session <i>If you must record the session you must first have written consent from your patient</i>
Security	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have reasonable steps been taken to ensure security measures are in place for protecting and controlling access to client data from misuse, interference and loss, as well as unauthorised access, modification and disclosure?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have reasonable steps been taken to ensure both ourselves and our clients access a secure internet connection?
Informed Consent	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have we considered how we will obtain the patient's informed consent specific to telehealth services? <i>Generally, the patient's consent is able to be inferred by the patient's participation in the telehealth consult. In cases where the patient is not competent and does not have the capacity to give consent, consent should be obtained in the same way as in a face-to-face consultation.</i> <i>This is however a good opportunity to check in with your patient that they understand this is a telehealth consult and check whether they have any questions or concerns about proceeding in this manner.</i> <i>Please note that informed consent will be required should you wish to perform a physical test or procedure or provide the patient's health information to a provider or where otherwise required by Medicare.</i>

Disclosure	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure personal information about a patient is not disclosed for any purpose other than the primary purpose it was collected, except in certain circumstances (see Australian Privacy Principle 6).
Billing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the patient aware of the billing arrangements for the consult?
Clinical Records	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure a proper clinical record of the consult is made – just as you would for an in person consult.
Technology Records	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accurately record what transpires with technology as part of the consult i.e. any interruptions in connection, issues with clear transmission etc for future reference in case these issues are of clinical significance.
Duty of care	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify what standard of care is required in the delivery of telehealth services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure the standard of care provided in a telehealth consultation meets the same required standards as care provided in a face-to-face consultation
<input type="checkbox"/>	A health practitioner would most likely have discharged this duty if they take into account the limits of the technology when making the diagnosis or recommending treatment.
Diagnosis & Follow up	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify which diagnoses will be excluded from telehealth ie. Which require hands on
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make appropriate arrangements to follow the progress of the patient and inform the patient's general practitioner or other relevant practitioners
Evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluate the patients use of telehealth service, and whether it is suitable for long-term use with that patient. Such evaluation should be done after the first telehealth service and at regular intervals.