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## **AMA, GOVERNMENT PARTNER UP TO WORK ON PERMANENT TELEHEALTH MODEL**

The AMA will work with the Federal Government to make Medicare-funded telehealth a permanent part of the Australian healthcare system.

Health Minister Greg Hunt announced the partnership approach during a joint media conference with AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, at Parliament House today.

“The AMA has been working with the Government on how to embed telehealth into the Australian healthcare system for months,” Dr Khorshid said.

“The AMA has long advocated for telehealth consultations to be subsidised under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

“The temporary COVID-19 arrangements have allowed us to test the model, and shown where refinements can be made.

“MBS-funded telehealth has been embraced by doctors and patients alike.

“The Government has recognised the AMA’s calls to keep access to telehealth for patients, and this partnership puts in place a framework and process to finalise the design of-MBS funded telehealth arrangements in time for the next Federal Budget.

“This will represent the biggest reform to Medicare since its introduction.

“Telehealth will not replace face to face care, but it does support better access to care for patients, including by supplementing face to face care or by supporting patients who face barriers to care, such as those in rural areas.

“Telehealth gives patients much more flexibility in how they can access care from their usual GP or treating specialist, particularly when they do not require a physical examination. This saves patient’s time and money and often means they do not need to take time away from work.

“For GPs and non-GP specialists, telehealth enables them to better support their patients to access care when they need it.”

The AMA is committed to working with the Government over coming months to finalise the long-term model of telehealth.

It is anticipated that the AMA proposal that patients enrol with a general practice to build a relationship with their usual GP will be part of the permanent operation of MBS-funded telehealth.

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