

From: AACMA President [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2020 5:08 PM
To: Dwyer, Ellie
Subject: ACCC interested party consultation - PHA application for authorisation [SEC=OFFICIAL] [ACCC-ACCCANDAER.FID2548400]
Attachments: Application Received - 01.04.20.pdf; Private Healthcare Australia Limited (PHA) - Consultation letter - 14 May 2020.pdf

Dear Ellie,

The Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association (AACMA) thanks the ACCC for the invitation to make comment on the PHA application for interim and final authorisation under section 88(1) of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth).

The AACMA is the peak professional association representing the majority of registered Chinese medicine practitioners since 1973 and in our role of supporting our members, we made a submission to PHA for the inclusion of telehealth consultations to be recognised for private health fund rebates especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

So we are very pleased to endorse the application made by PHA to the ACCC especially the provision of Telehealth or virtual/remote consultations to be added to the private health fund rebate schedule.

The AACMA has devised comprehensive guidelines and provides professional development for our members to be able to deliver an effective remote consultation safely and securely for all patients. This includes maintaining their privacy and confidentiality by using secure password protected media platforms to prevent third party interference. Professional indemnity insurers provide cover for Telehealth consultations.

The public demand for these consultations increased during the enforced social distancing and isolation that needed to occur to control the spread of the Coronavirus. The overall feedback from patients was positive because they were able to still safely access quality care without leaving home. Chinese herbal medicine is particularly suited to telehealth consultations with herbal remedies conveniently delivered to the person's door.

There has been a positive impact with patients now having the ability to claim private health fund rebates for Telehealth consultations.

Fortunately, technology has advanced to enable this service to be provided to the public and AACMA endorses the continuation of telehealth consultations after the interim six month period.

Benefits

- *greater ability to conveniently provide a health service for the public*
- *foundations for the safe delivery of Telehealth are now in place to keep offering this service*
- *enables rural and remote communities, people who are disabled, incapacitated, immune compromised, unable or too ill to leave home, convenient access to quality care*

Conditions

- *secure media platforms to ensure privacy and confidentiality*
- *video consultations rather than just audio*

AACMA members are pleased with the interim authorisation and look forward to the Telehealth aspect in particular, added as a standard private health fund rebate.

Yours sincerely,
Waveny Holland
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President

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