

26 February 2021

The Hon Darren Chester MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Darren.Chester.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister Chester

As COVID-19 vaccines roll out this week, I would like to extend my hearty congratulations on the leadership the Morrison Government has shown to look after the health of Australians as we continue to live through the virus pandemic. Now is a prime opportunity to capitalise on what the Government has achieved, and continue this demonstration of leadership by officially announcing the permanency of telehealth allied health services.

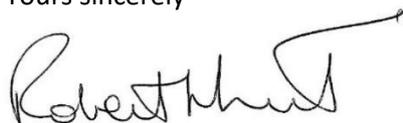
On 27 November last year, your colleague Minister Greg Hunt advised Australians that telehealth would be made a permanent part of Medicare and be universally available for all Australians. This announcement was enthusiastically welcomed by dietitians and their patients across Australia, including veterans, who because of telehealth were able to take control of their health during the pandemic. However, the lack of information about what conditions might apply to see a dietitian via telehealth is causing veterans and other patients great concern.

As the peak body for Dietitians in Australia, Dietitians Australia would be glad to offer our expertise to your advisors about how telehealth benefits veterans, and any conditions that should be placed on telehealth dietetics to ensure veterans are receiving high quality dietetic care in person, online or over the phone.

This matter is urgent, with current DVA and Medicare telehealth items expiring after 31 March 2021 and no information public about their permanency or any conditions of access. Hence, I would like to meet with you via teleconference before the next sitting week. I will also be speaking with your colleagues with relevant ministries, and those in the Opposition and crossbench about this critical issue.

I look forward to hearing from your office about a suitable time in the next fortnight.

Yours sincerely



Robert Hunt
Chief Executive Officer