

26 February 2021

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Senator.Colbeck@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister Colbeck

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.

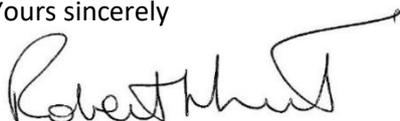
On 27 November last year, your colleague Minister Greg Hunt advised Australians that telehealth would be made a permanent part of Medicare and be universally available for all Australians. This announcement was enthusiastically welcomed by dietitians and their patients across Australia, who because of 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 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 senior Australians, and any conditions that should be placed on telehealth dietetics to ensure older Australians are receiving high quality dietetic care in person, online or over the phone.

This matter is urgent, with current Medicare telehealth items expiring after 31 March 2021 and no information public about their permanency or any conditions of access. Hence, I implore you to advocate to your colleague Minister Hunt for telehealth dietetics to be made permanent. 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 an announcement from the Morrison Government in the next month.

Yours sincerely



Robert Hunt
Chief Executive Officer