



The Royal Australian
College of General
Practitioners

Media release

For immediate release

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RACGP launches video consultation standards in support of high quality primary healthcare

To guide general practices through video consultations and provide a safety and quality framework for patients and GPs, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is today launching the RACGP *Standards for general practices offering video consultations* as part of GP11 – The Conference for General Practice – which is taking place in Hobart from 6 – 8 October.

The new standards highlight a range of safety and quality issues of particular significance to general practices offering video consultations with Australian registered and based medical specialists. The development of these standards follows the July implementation of Medicare rebates and financial incentives for video consultations for patients in regional, outer metropolitan and remote Australia, as well as for patients of residential aged care facilities or Aboriginal medical services anywhere in Australia.

Dr Mike Civil, Chair of the RACGP Telehealth Standards Taskforce and incoming Chair of the RACGP National Standing Committee – Standards for General Practices, said video consultations are a new form of healthcare delivery for general practices and there is a need to provide the profession with guidance.

“Video consultations are an alternative option to face-to-face consultations. There are many scenarios where a video consultation that is clinically justifiable will enable more convenient and accessible healthcare delivery without compromising patient safety.

“The *Standards for general practices offering video consultations* will support general practitioners to interpret safety and quality issues in the context of a video consultation between a patient and a specialist in another location,” Dr Civil said.

“The RACGP welcomes the improved accessibility that video consultations are expected to deliver and these new standards are an example of the College’s e-health initiatives in the primary healthcare setting. Telehealth initiatives – which include video consultations – are an innovative way of providing healthcare to patients and increasing the range of services GPs are able to provide,” he said.

The *Standards for general practices offering video consultations* are essential to the successful use and uptake of video consultation technology and identify clinical issues such as:

- The process for identifying participants in video consultations
- Whether a video consultation is appropriate for the patient
- Risk management protocols
- Privacy and security of the consultation and data
- Reliable and secure technical systems fit for clinical purpose.

The standards, which will be distributed to general practices nationally during October, are available at www.racgp.org.au/standards/telehealth. The new standards are an addendum to the RACGP Standards for general practices (4th edition).

The RACGP acknowledges the funding received by the Department of Health and Ageing to develop and disseminate these standards.

In addition to the standards, to provide GPs with guidance on a range of implementation, technical and usage issues, in August 2011 the RACGP launched the *Implementation guidelines for video consultations in general practice*, which are available at www.racgp.org.au/telehealth.

For more information about GP11 and to download the conference program, please visit www.gp11.com.au.

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Media contacts

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is Australia's largest professional general practice organisation and represents urban and rural general practitioners. We represent over 20,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice and are proud that over 18,000 general practitioners in Australia have chosen to be a member of the College. There are over 125 million general practice consultations taking place annually in Australia. Visit www.racgp.org.au.