

## **8. Medicare Requirement for Patient to be present**

Current Medicare requirements mandate that my child be physically present for all specialist appointments, including telehealth consultations, in order for the provider to claim a rebate. In practice, her presence adds no clinical value - she is not engaged in the consultation, nor is care delivered directly to her during these sessions. Instead, the requirement serves only as a compliance mechanism (“sighting” the patient).

This creates unintended consequences. She is routinely withdrawn from school to attend appointments that do not require her participation, disrupting her learning and sense of normalcy. Additionally, the cumulative burden of frequent medical appointments contributes to heightened stress and anxiety, particularly given the ongoing nature of epilepsy management.

### **Recommendation (8)**

Introduce flexibility within Medicare requirements to allow clinicians to claim rebates for certain consultations without the patient (child) being physically present, where clinically appropriate.

This could include:

- Follow-up or case management appointments primarily involving the parent/carer
- Telehealth consultations focused on treatment planning, medication management, or reporting
- Situations where the clinician can confirm ongoing care without direct patient interaction

Such a change would reduce unnecessary disruption to a child’s education, minimise psychological burden, and better align administrative requirements with the realities of managing chronic conditions like epilepsy, without compromising quality of care or clinical oversight.

Kind regards,

Kristy