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12 September 2011

Executive Officer
Medical
AHPRA
GPO Box 9958
Melbourne 3001

Dear Sir/Madam,

Technology-based Patient Consultations

The Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA) notes the intention of the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) to improve its expectations of medical practitioners who participate in technology based patient consultation. As the primary body representing the professional and economic interests of Australian anaesthetists, we appreciate the opportunity to consider the Draft Guidelines *Technology Based Patient Consultations*.

The ASA endorses the overall philosophy of the introduction of technology based patient consultations. We recognise the need for improving medical services to rural and remote communities and the importance of ongoing progress in the use of technology to ensure patients' satisfaction with primary health care.

The protection of patient privacy is an increasingly important concern. The ASA believes that it is the duty of care of all health care professionals to ensure that patients' privacy is maintained at all times. As such any technology based patient consultation system must be fit for clinical purposes and protect the transmission, security, confidentiality and privacy of patient health information.

Finally, it should be noted that section *T.6.4 Telehealth Specialist Services* of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) provides information on the introduction of new telehealth MBS video consultation items by specialists and is fully supported by the ASA.

As always the ASA remains ready to assist the MBA in any way it can and appreciates being kept informed of the developments of the patient consultation guidelines.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Mulcahy
President