



Personal attendance for musculoskeletal ultrasound and personal supervision for nuclear medicine imaging services

Last updated: 20 June 2022

Background

Since early 2020, the Department of Health has provided the below interpretation of the rules for personal attendance for musculoskeletal ultrasound and personal supervision for positron emission tomography (PET) nuclear medicine imaging services due to the impact of COVID-19 on service provision.

Where COVID-19 response protocols restricted providers from attending patients in person, providers could continue to provide musculoskeletal ultrasound and PET nuclear medicine imaging services. The usual rules still needed to be followed where COVID-19 response protocols did not prevent personal attendance or personal supervision.

The Department recognises that the situation with respect to COVID-19 continues to fluctuate and may limit the ability of providers to attend patients in person. In addition, the Department is reviewing the personal supervision arrangements for musculoskeletal ultrasound and nuclear medicine imaging services and considering whether any changes are required.

What are the changes?

The Department will continue this interpretation of the rules for personal attendance for musculoskeletal ultrasound and personal supervision for PET nuclear medicine imaging services.

Where COVID-19 response protocols prevent personal attendance or personal supervision, and it is medically necessary and safe to provide the service, medical practitioners may do so. It is expected that the service is provided only where there are appropriate supervision arrangements (e.g. remote supervision) and it is clinically appropriate for the service to be performed.

This interpretation only applies to the following:

- Subclause 2.1.7 of the *Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table) Regulations (No. 2) 2020* (DIST), which requires personal attendance of the responsible medical practitioner for musculoskeletal ultrasound services.
- Subclause 2.4.3 of the DIST, which requires that PET nuclear scanning services are performed under the personal supervision of the credentialed specialist responsible for the service.

The usual rules must be followed in circumstances where personal supervision is not prevented.



What does this mean for providers?

Medical practitioners who are unable to personally attend the patient will be able to continue to provide the service where it is medically necessary and safe to do so. It is expected that the service is provided only where there are appropriate supervision arrangements in place, and it is clinically appropriate for the service to be performed. The usual rules must be followed in circumstances where personal supervision is not prevented.

How will these changes affect patients?

Patients will continue to have access to musculoskeletal ultrasound and PET nuclear medicine imaging services that are listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

Please note that the information provided is a general guide only. It is ultimately the responsibility of treating practitioners to use their professional judgment to determine the most clinically appropriate services to provide, and then to ensure that any services billed to Medicare fully meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the legislation.

This sheet is current as of the Last updated date shown above.