

**World
Physiotherapy**

TELEHEALTH ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

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1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is a combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular goal or program.
(WHO, 1995)

Advocacy is a planned action of influence undertaken to achieve a specific outcome

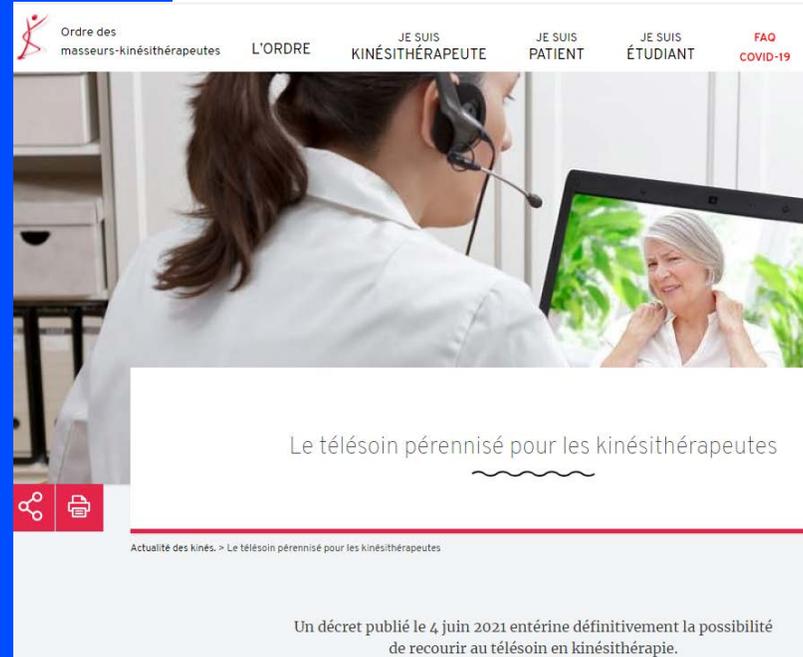
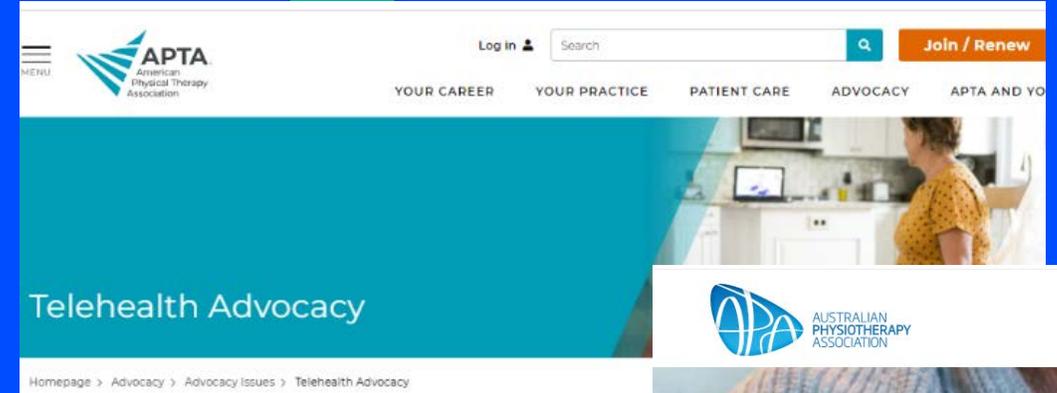


WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

An advocacy campaign is a planned project over a given period of time in order to achieve a specific goals.

Campaigning is the process of doing advocacy.

It is the process of **engaging** with your members or the general public to generate and/or mobilise support for your campaign that can be critical to achieving your goals.



Telehealth

The APA is working hard to keep these FAQs current and...
If you reside in an area currently in Stage 3 or Stage 4 Restrictions, please...



2. BACKGROUND

TELEHEALTH

Telehealth is the remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by means of telecommunications technology. **Telerehabilitation** refers specifically to clinical rehabilitation services with the focus of evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment.

Telehealth has been shown to be a tool that allows physiotherapy services to continue while avoiding risks (for example, travelling, maintaining social distance) associated with other treatment approaches.

TELEHEALTH

Telehealth can be provided in a variety of ways including:

- 2-way real-time visits with audio, video, or both; asynchronous e-visits;
- virtual check-ins;
- remote evaluations of recorded videos or images;
- telephone assessment and management services.

TELEHEALTH AND COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability of health systems to facilitate access to teleconsultations has been of critical importance.

A growing body of evidence suggests telehealth can be safe, cost-effective, and, in some cases, provide better outcomes than face-to-face care.

**75% of World
Physiotherapy
member
organisations in
2020 reported
physiotherapists
are permitted to
provide telehealth
services.**

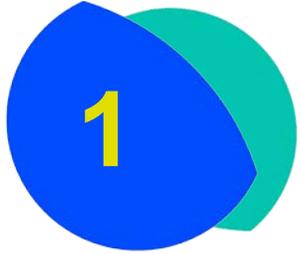


Nevertheless, recognition and proper payment for this service is still a challenge in some countries or territories.

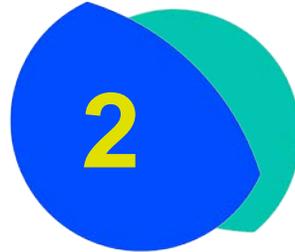


3. KEY ISSUES

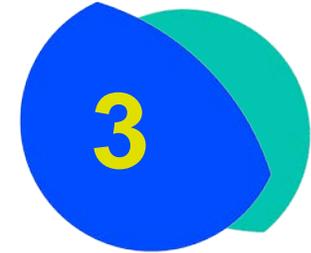
TELEHEALTH OFFERS A NUMBER OF ADVANTAGES



SERVICE
USERS



SERVICE
PROVIDERS



SOCIETY

BENEFITS TO SERVICE USERS

Expands the ability to connect with needed providers and/or specialists, regardless of distance or remote locations

Decreases barriers such as negotiating parking and waiting rooms or travel time

Increases safety by eliminating the need to travel for those with mobility impairments or ill health

Opens access to the same service via technology irrespective of changes in the service user's day-to-day locations

Increases a service user's independence and control in managing their own health problems thanks to easy access to online self-monitoring and self-management resources

Increases flexibility as service users can schedule therapy at times that best suit them

Decreases costs related to travel, assistance needed to leave home, and time lost on other activities including employment and caring for others

BENEFITS TO SERVICE PROVIDERS

Expands the ability to bring about greater workforce efficiencies including reduction in travel between care settings and continuing professional development

Opens an opportunity to standardize service user pathways more reliably

Allows greater control of content and format of self-management information and resources (i.e., consistencies)

Increases the ability to monitor standards of care and service user outcomes

Provides opportunities to think and work more creatively by leveraging the advantages afforded by ever-evolving technology options

BENEFITS TO SOCIETY

Increases efficient use of public resources; especially in systems of publicly funded health

Provides benefits to employers including fewer work absences and greater organizational efficiencies

Provides a wider societal gain of having a better informed and autonomous public with regard to personal health

Encourages greater emphasis on self-management and a less medically dependent society

Provides a greater opportunity to influence health-seeking behaviors

Adapts to individuals' expectations and preferences to live more digital lives

Creates an equity of access independent of geography

Decreases environmental impact with reduced travel to access care

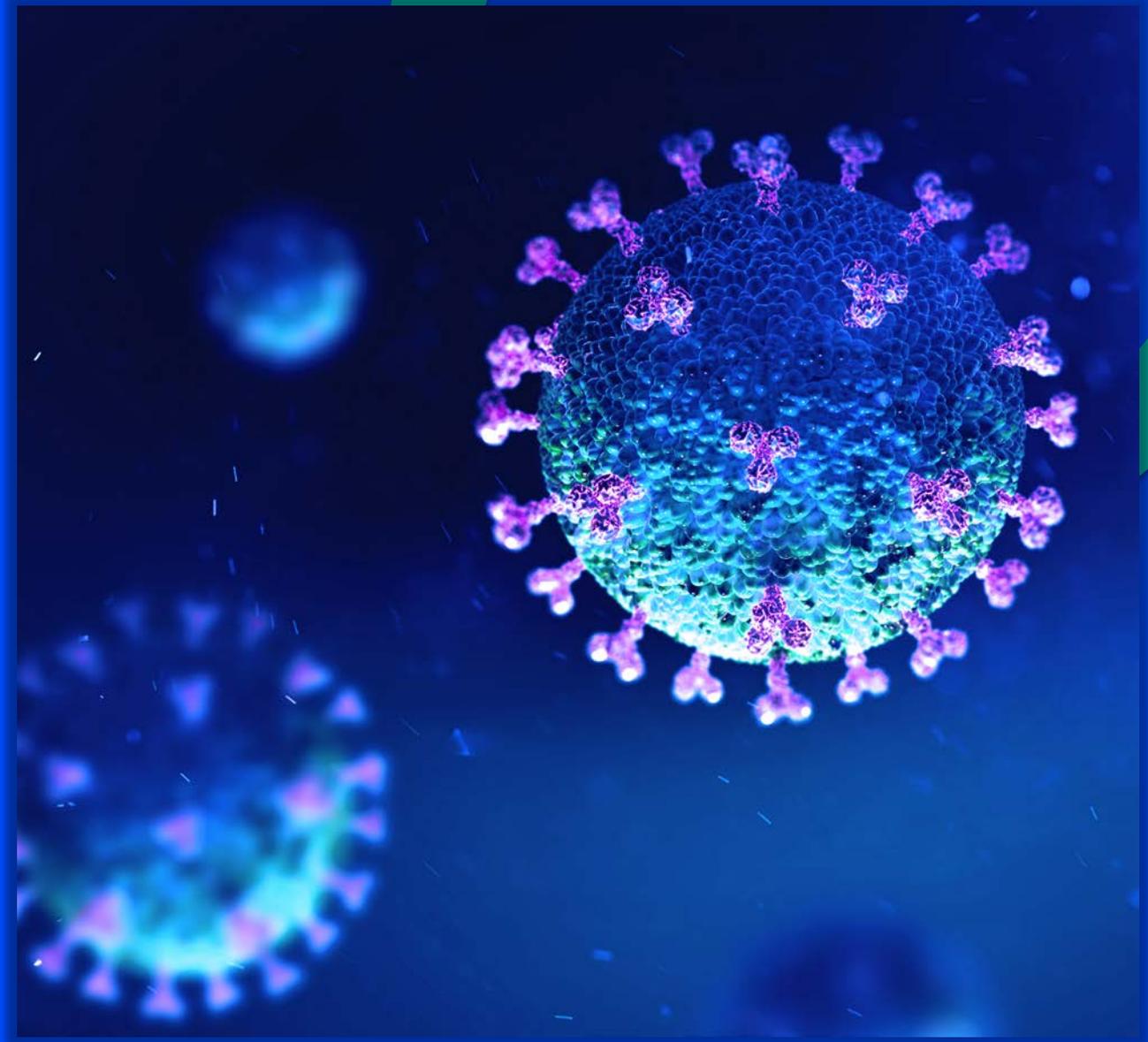
BENEFIT OF TELEHEALTH DURING PANDEMIC

Physiotherapy has a critical role to play in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the community.

With most traditional physiotherapy care suspended during periods of social distancing, patients will likely experience a deterioration of other conditions unrelated to the pandemic

Individuals, unable to leave their homes will become even more sedentary, lose mobility and function, and require physiotherapy services when restrictions are lifted.

However there is an opportunity to now to prevent this community wide functional decline with **telehealth**.





EVIDENCE TO GUIDE TELEHEALTH

Many physiotherapists moving to delivery of online services because of the pandemic.

PEDro have put together some high-quality clinical research to guide telehealth interventions.

<https://pedro.org.au/english/evidence-to-guide-telehealth-physiotherapy/>

REMOTE CARE THROUGH TELEHEALTH

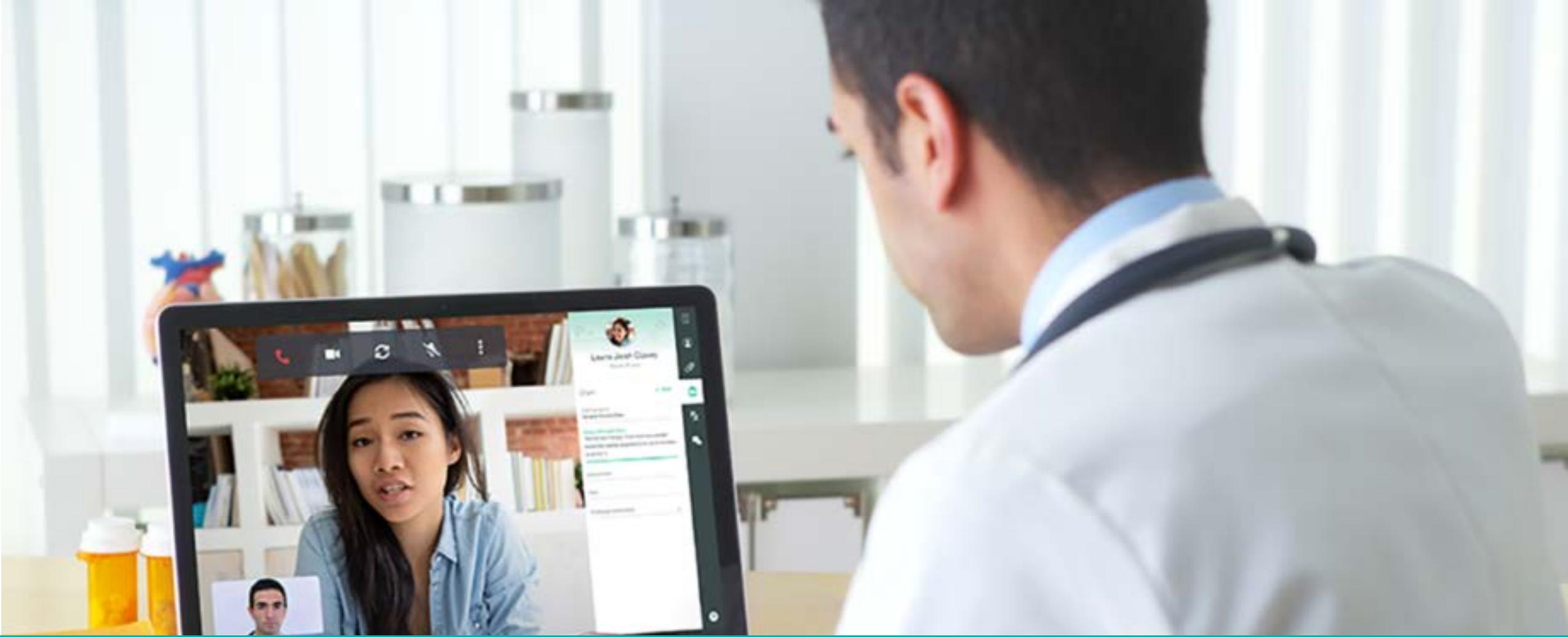
The aim of this Cochrane collection is to ensure immediate access to systematic reviews most directly relevant to remote health care through telehealth.

As face-to-face consultations between healthcare workers and patients pose a potential risk to both parties, remote care and telehealth offer alternatives.

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/collections/doi/SC000043/full>



Cochrane
Library



4. ACTIONS BY WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY

REPORT FROM DIGITAL PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE TASK FORCE

As part of the collaboration between International Network of Physiotherapy Regulatory Authorities (INPTRA) and World Physiotherapy a joint Digital Physical Therapy Practice Task Force was formed to develop a white paper addressing physiotherapy practice and regulation in the digital age.

This was published in 2020 and has been well utilised with positive feedback particularly due to the challenges of face-to-face contact during the global pandemic.

<https://world.physio/sites/default/files/2021-06/digital-practice-report-2021-FINAL.pdf>

WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY RESPONSE

WCPT has collated a hub of resources and information for physiotherapists about COVID-19, including a large section on digital physiotherapy and telehealth.

<https://world.physio/covid-19-information-hub/covid-19-practice-based-resources#digital-telehealth>

#PPE4PT campaign

Find out more about campaigns related to COVID-19 and physiotherapy.

[Read more](#)

COVIDPhysio Registry

Find out what is going on – a list of projects and activities to support the global profession and responses to the pandemic.

[Read more](#)

Briefing papers

Briefing papers produced by World Physiotherapy.

[Read more](#)

Practice based resources

Covering acute care, infection prevention and control, MSK, guidelines, education on COVID management, digital/telehealth and private practice.

[Read more](#)

Education based resources

Supporting changes in physiotherapist entry level education.

[Read more](#)

Professional regulation

Resources from physiotherapy regulators.

[Read more](#)

Health and wellbeing of physiotherapists

Looking after the mental health and wellbeing of physiotherapists

[Read more](#)

For the general public

Includes advice in support of self management.

[Read more](#)

Member organisations' resources

Materials produced to support members in their country/territory but may be of relevance to others.

[Read more](#)

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

World Physiotherapy can further assist your advocacy efforts by writing a letter to your health minister / insurance company in support of any campaigning you undertake.

To discuss this, please contact Jonathon Kruger jkruger@world.physio or Rachel Moore rmoore@world.physio

World Physiotherapy will amplify any successes achieved by our member organisations on our website and through social media.



5. ACTIONS FOR WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

World Physiotherapy member organisations are encouraged to support your frontline physiotherapists to expand their scope of practice to include telehealth.

ACTIVITIES

Provision of CPD and practice support to guide members on how to implement telehealth.



Advocacy activities to allow scope of practice to include telehealth

PHYSIOPEDIA

Physiopedia have developed an online course:

Telehealth for Physiotherapy Programme

The aim of this programme is to widen your understanding of telehealth and enable you to implement telehealth appropriately in physiotherapy.

<https://members.physio-pedia.com/learn/telehealth-for-physiotherapy-programme/>





PHYSIOPEDIA

There is a new telehealth feature in Physioplus, which includes exercise software, online consultation options and patient management tools.

This has all of your video consultation and treatment needs covered. This new telehealth and exercise prescription software as part of the PRO Physioplus membership.

<https://www.physiospot.com/physioplus/latest-telehealth-consultation-platform-available-in-physioplus/>

TELEHEALTH TOOLBOX

Telehealth Toolbox is a collection of guidelines and practical tools that aims to accelerate the adoption of telehealth practices by primary care physicians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://telehealthtoolbox.netlify.app/>



ADVOCACY: WRITE TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS / INSURERS

- Review the evidence and understand the data that supports telehealth.
- Use the template letter, which can be translated and adapted (you can add your organisation's logo), to lobby your government for access to telehealth for your members.
- Use the factsheets produced for this campaign to explain the importance of telehealth
- Publicise you are campaigning on telehealth on your website eg:
- Use social media to share your actions on your campaign

ADVOCACY: ENGAGE YOUR MEMBERS

Encourage your members to:

- Contact their local politicians to explain that physiotherapy, as a health profession, has a critical role to play in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the community during a pandemic
- Understand that telehealth is a key to ongoing physiotherapy treatment and practice viability
- Lobby their local politicians to prioritise maintaining the health and wellbeing of those in the community.
- Use social media to share the campaign and demand action.

ADVOCACY: CREATE A COALITION OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

- Physiotherapists are not alone. All health care professionals are impacted.
- Which local organisations in your country represent doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, occupational therapists and other health care professionals?
- Can you work together to collectively draw attention to the telehealth issue?

FURTHER RESOURCES

Centre for Health, Exercise & Sports Medicine, University of Melbourne, free [on-line training for physiotherapists in telehealth delivery of evidence-based knee osteoarthritis care](#)

Australian Physiotherapy Association advice on [telehealth](#) and [telehealth guidelines response to COVID-19](#)

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (UK) advice on [remote digital solutions](#)

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists: [policy on ehealth for physiotherapists \(PDF\)](#)

American Physical Therapy Association (US) advice on [telehealth](#) and Facebook live recording on [Implementing Telehealth in Your Practice STAT: Practical Guidance from Experienced Telehealth PTs.](#)



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