



Media Release

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Dial-a-doctor: Aussies go digital to manage health at home

'Sandwich generation' set to adopt telehealth to help juggle busy lifestyles

Aussies 'sandwiched' between caring for their children and elderly parents, are the most likely to take advantage of telehealth services to better manage family health from home, according to a new research report commissioned by **nbn**.

The **nbn™ Digital Health At Home Report**, shows the vast majority (90 per cent) of the 'sandwich generation' have delayed a GP visit for reasons including avoiding wasting time, losing money and having to take days off work.

It highlights how access to fast broadband and telehealth services such as GP video conferencing and in-home monitoring for the elderly will help time-poor Aussies prioritise personal and family healthcare.

Key findings from the report include:

- **Aussies are managing health at home:** Half of respondents who use telehealth (50 per cent) access it for convenience, one third (34 per cent) use it to better manage personal or family health, and one in five (21 per cent) use it when they can't get in to see a doctor;
- **Parents are saving time and money online;** Around one third (37 per cent) of pregnant women and new parent respondents harness telehealth to save time and avoid costs of GP and hospital visits (28 per cent);
- **Information is key to a happier and healthier future;** with better awareness of telehealth services, more than half (62 per cent) of respondents would feel more equipped to make health decisions, feel safer knowing they can monitor health from home (57 per cent), and be more efficient and productive (49 per cent).
- **Telehealth bridging the health divide;** one in three (30 per cent) regionally located respondents use telehealth and one in five of all Aussies (20 per cent) do so to access health services not available in their location.

Dr Ginni Mansberg, GP and family health expert said:

"Juggling work and family commitments can mean getting to the doctor is tough, and often people put off a visit purely because they don't have the time. Now, as more Australians gain access to the **nbn™** network, they are being empowered to manage their health from home.

With access to fast broadband, everything from testing blood pressure and skin cancer checks, to in-home monitoring for the elderly, can be done online from the comfort of people's homes."



Dr David Hansen, CEO, Australian E-Health Research Centre said:

“Access to health services for Aussies living in rural and remote Australia is a real issue, meaning that unfortunately not all Aussies are receiving the medical attention they need. However, as GPs and specialists start to offer digital services, people can receive quality care through uninterrupted videoconferencing and other broadband enabled delivery methods no matter where they live.

“Telehealth is also offering a time-efficient solution for city-based patients, offering anytime, anywhere healthcare. Our recent trials testing telehealth applications over fast broadband demonstrated these services can help improve patient outcomes and reduce costs to the healthcare system.”

There are almost 2 million homes and businesses around the country which can already connect to the **nbn**[™] network, with every Australian set to have access by 2020.

Visit our **nbn**[™] [blog series](#) to learn more about how access to fast broadband is transforming the way Australians are managing their health from home.

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Notes to editors

- **nbn** is building a new, fast wholesale broadband network to be accessed by all communities across Australia. Our goal is to connect eight million homes and businesses by 2020.
- The research included in the **Digital Health At Home Report** was commissioned by **nbn**, the company building Australia’s new landline phone and internet network, and developed by Colmar Brunton, with an Australian sample size of 1534 people – November 2015. The report was reviewed and endorsed by a number of health industry bodies including CSIRO, Australian E-Health Research Centre and Deaf Services Australia.
- Telehealth services are not a substitute for a doctor or other medical professional, but work alongside these services to allow people to better manage their health and wellbeing.
- The ‘sandwich generation’ refers to Australians aged between 24-55 who are often at a life stage where they are between caring for their children and elderly parents.
- End-user experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the **nbn**[™] network, depends on the technology over which services are delivered to your premises and some factors outside our control like equipment quality, software, broadband plans and how the end-user’s service provider designs its network. Access to your work network will depend on factors outside our control like your organisation’s IT policy and infrastructure.