

The following outlines considerations for providing virtual care:

Patient Selection and Preparation

As a provider, when offering services via virtual care, ensure your patient:

- is a suitable candidate for the service.
- has access to an appropriate device (i.e. desktop or laptop computer, tablet or mobile).
- has an Internet/Wi-Fi connection or mobile data.
- has a suitable private location in which to attend the appointment.
- understands the process of a virtual care appointment and what to expect during the session.
- knows to expect an email, as all appointment details will be communicated through this avenue.

Consent for Service

When you host a virtual care assessment, you are required to document on the health record that the patient has consented to the service. This does not require a physical signature from the patient as a verbal consent will suffice. Some Regional Health Authorities may require consent for the program areas within the respective regions. Therefore healthcare providers should consult their organization's policy around consent for service and their own professional standards for informing clients about the risks and benefits of care.

Suggested Order

Below is a suggested order for the virtual care session:

1. The names of all parties who are joining the session will be shared.
 - Clinician will introduce themselves and any other persons invited to participate in or observe the appointment.
 - Confirm the identity of the patient.
 - Confirm the identity of anyone else who is in the room with the patient or who has otherwise joined the appointment call.
2. Ensure the patient understands the consent terms for the appointment. A script to guide the discussion of consent terms is provided in the Appendix.
3. Proceed with the appointment.
4. Remind the patient they have an option to complete a survey regarding their appointment experience. The link can be found within the email that was sent with the appointment details.

To provide knowledgeable consent while engaging a patient in a virtual care session, there are key points to consider. It is important to explain the nature of the program, the benefits and any potential risks. Patients need to understand that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time. In addition, providers must explain and make an effort to ensure that patients understand how their information is being collected, used, and disclosed.

The points listed below can be used as a guide to support this process:

- Virtual care enables access to services from a distance when in-person appointments are not possible. It allows patients to attend appointments in their local community or in the comfort of their own home and it helps patients avoid busy waiting rooms and clinics, thus promoting infection control. Virtual care options are available to health care providers in the Regional Health Authorities and those in community practices.
- Information that has been provided in order to schedule this appointment, such as the patient name and email address is held at the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) and may only be collected, used or disclosed in accordance with legislation such as the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* and the *Personal Health Information Act*.
- The application used for virtual care is secure and encrypted; however, NLCHI is not responsible for ensuring that a patient's personal computer, mobile device, home Internet, or Wi-Fi connection is secure. Virtual care sessions will not be audio or video recorded by the health care provider without prior patient consent, and through approval obtained from NLCHI. Additionally, health care providers have Professional Practice Standards which will also guide them. It is always recommended that the provider and patient have open communication regarding the video and audio recording of appointments and have set expectations prior to the appointment.
- Participation in the appointment is voluntary and the patient may stop the appointment at any time.
- Ask the patient: "Do you have any questions before we start?"
- Ask the patient: "Do you understand the statements made and do you consent to proceed with the appointment?"