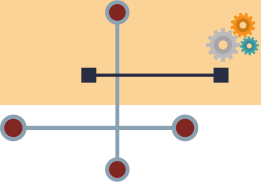# SHIFT TO VIRTUAL CARE

Primary care response to COVID-19 Pandemic

WHAT DIGITAL PLATFORMS ARE TEAMS USING?

Appointments by Phone:

- Most teams have called patients to either cancel or change appointments to over the phone.
  - How are providers conducting phone call appointments?
    - Providers have taken their office phones home
    - Providers are using programs such as CounterPath to re-direct calls to their laptops
    - Providers are using blocked ID on personal devices or a VOIP phone app
    - Nurses have been conducting phone triage as call volumes increase

Schedule Virtual Team Meetings to Stay Connected!

Appointments Virtually:

- Most teams are providing virtual visits via OTN
  - Admin staff that have ONEID credentials are booking appointments for patients that providers indicate
  - ONEID accounts have been extended to all IHPs
- Teams have also opted for EMR integrated virtual care options such as Medeo
- A list of virtual care options can be found on the OMD website
- Electronic Communication Patient Consent Templates on the OMD website
  - Summary document found here
- Group programs are being re-booked to be conducted virtually via zoom.
  - Teams have also recorded group programs for patients to watch

- Challenges:
  - "*Rural and remote areas don't have access to highspeed internet*"
  - "*Not all digital platforms are compatible with the devices providers have*"
  - "*ONEID set up is quite lengthy due to high volume of requests*"
  - "*Teams don't have access to nor a budget to purchase devices such as ipads, webcams, headsets etc*"
  - "*Not all patients have access to computers, smartphones or telephones...... these patients should not be forgotten in this transition to virtual care*"
  - "*Difficulty in receiving onsite support for installation and training, due to geographical barriers*"
  - "*Lack of internal resources to implement, train, and troubleshoot another new system at this time*"

Sign Up for OntarioMD Virtual Care Webinars & Listen to Recordings Here

Appointments by Phone vs Virtually:

- Majority of providers have switched to phone call visits
- Providers are indicating the most appropriate appointment type
  - Some types of appointments happening virtually are: medication renewal, stable chronic disease follow-up, acute conditions, stable mental health follow-up and dietary counselling and follow-up
- Some teams are asking their patients which method they prefer

The best virtual solution is the right technology for the patient at the right time. This means that you may have to use multiple solutions.
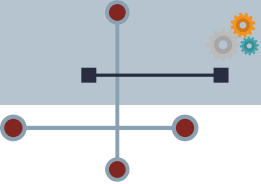
PATIENT MESSAGING

Messaging to Patients:

- Template messages for websites can be found on the OMD website
- Messaging was provided through by HealthMyself & Telus PS
- Some teams are providing messaging to patients via radio broadcasting
- Teams are posting on social media with health promotion material and mental health resources (ex: Social Worker speak about dealing with stress and anxiety during COVID-19)
- Teams have emailed patients Facts Sheets on self-isolation
- Teams are hosting live Q&As on facebook and instagram
- Recording Group Education Presentations

Phone and email example:
NOTICE TO ALL PATIENTS:
With a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our community, we will be rescheduling all non-urgent visits until further notice. We will be offering phone visits only for matters that can be reviewed by phone. If you require an urgent appointment, please call to speak with a staff member. At that time, you will be screened for COVID-19 exposure. We will give you directions on what to do next if you screen positive.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Patient Feedback:

"Given the circumstances, many patients were pleased with the added options for virtual care"

"I believe many patients have cancelled some non-essential appointments."

"Patients are welcoming the ability to still connect with their Primary Care Provider"

"Most support the idea – they'd prefer to not come into the clinic waiting room."

"For the most part patients don't actually want to attend the clinic. We are physically seeing patients who must receive a hands on assessment. ALL patients attending the clinic are screened prior to booking the appointment and then upon arriving."

"For those patients that have successful eVisits with their physician we are getting resoundingly good feedback about the options to have virtual care and the access to their primary care provider being uninterrupted during this crisis.."

"We are in a rural setting in which some of our patients live 45-60 minutes away so they are not too disappointed that they do not have to make the drive for an appointment."
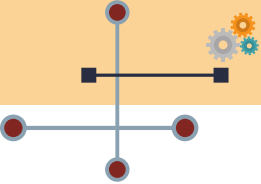
INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES BY TEAMS:

"Our RN is really focusing on system navigation and reaching out to isolated patients with resources during this situation." – CrossTown FHT

"We have taken on a project to call all of our elderly patients to encourage self-isolation, checking to ensure that they have enough medication and groceries and assisting with making arrangements. We have set up a community website for individuals to offer or ask for help." - Bancroft Community FHT
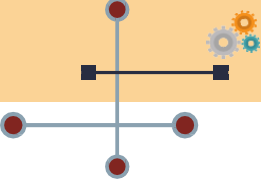
"We have contacted our local pharmacist to arrange for extension of prescriptions for chronic medication, plus a letter to employers (there are only a couple of major employers) and Chamber of Commerce indicating that we will not be providing off work notes for workers." – Marathon FHT

"We are providing nursing support via telephone call to patients who attend the local COVID-19 assessment clinics. Patients who are screened/assessed can consent to a follow up call from a nurse. The nurses can refer to mental health counselling or counselling from a registered dietitian to increase access to information they may need while at home." - North Simcoe FHT

"We utilized "Wait While" to provide patients with a virtual wait list for care at the after-hours clinic. This ensures that patients can socially distance themselves while waiting for their appointment. Patients are notified when it is their appointment, and they can then enter the clinic after the prior patient has left. If a patient does not have access to the internet on their phone and would like to add themselves to the wait list, they can either text in their information to be added or speak with a greeter." – Georgian Bay FHT
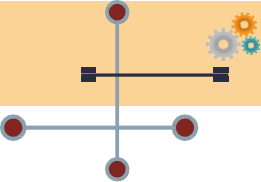
"All our primary care providers organized together and realized that they could provide these assessments virtually, which cuts down people's need to travel, keeps them at home … doesn't use that personal protective equipment, (and) it doesn't bring people together risking further infection." – Dr. Miriam Klassen, Huron Perth Public Health's Medical Officer of Health

"We have also developed a COVID-19 mobile assessment service. We screen people over the phone and if a person qualifies, we send a nurse to the home to do a swab." – Elliot Lake FHT

RESOURCES

Resource	Description
Adopting and Integrating Virtual Visits into Care: Draft Clinical Guidance	This document provides guidance for health care providers, including Ontario Health Teams, who are interested in integrating virtual care into their practices—particularly virtual visits. It provides a set of key considerations, informed by professional standards and best practices, for each step in the process. Key Supports: • Examples of Virtual Visit Pilots and Case Studies • Understand your legal and professional obligations • Virtual Visit Modalities (ex: messaging and video) and associated privacy and security risks • Examples of administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect digital personal health information • Strategies to onboard patients • Virtual Visit Best Practices • Obtaining consent

Video Visit Platforms	Key Supports:
	• Video Visit Platforms
	   o Free options
	   o Yes, Zoom is PHIPA compliant
	• Message for patients to be posted on websites
	• Patient Consent
	   o Summary document found here

OTN	Key Supports: • Organizing OTN membership and billing guidelines • OTN sign up – creating an ONEID and express entry options • Setting up Virtual Visits (created by Georgina and Sudbury NPLCs) • OTN – How to schedule and join a video visit • OTN Personal Video Conferencing in a Nutshell • Patient Handout with e-Visit Information (OTN) • Virtual Visit Patient Information (Southlake Academic FHT) *Note: OTN is available for physicians and health care providers
Screening Forms and Tools for EMRs	Key Supports: • OTN eVisits • VirtualCare – ThinkResearch • CognisantMD Tablet Screening Form • Screening forms for Telus PS, Accuro and OSCAR
P&P Screening Form	Key Supports: • P&P screening tool for COVID-19 created by Hamilton FHT and importing instructions

COVID-19 Toolbar (Telus PS)	• Toolbar created by Dr. Adam Stewart • Toolbar created by eCE
OHIP Billing Codes	Key Supports: • Billing Codes
Clinical Practice Guidelines DRAFT – Policies for Virtual eVisits	Two Virtual Policy Templates Available by: • Georgina NPLC • Sudbury District NPLCs Key Supports: • Professional Liability Insurance requirements for IHPs • Policies for video visits, secure messaging and phone calls • Procedures for video conferences (pre-setup, patient info, troubleshooting, FAQs etc) • Privacy and security • Information Security Incident
Pandemic Work From Home Policy: COVID-19 specific	Key Supports: • Specific policy created in response to COVID-19 pandemic (created by Cross Town FHT)
Special Virtual Care Offers	• ThinkResearch is offering a discounted rate of $10 per month for groups of 10+ providers. Please contact Shilpa Magesh: shilpa.magesh@thinkresearch.com • AdraCare is offering a 3 month free service with no contracts
Electronic Communication Patient Consent Form Template	• To be used as a template
OMA & OMD Virtual Care Fact Sheet	• Quick Fact Sheet with information about virtual platforms and billing codes for physicians
ePrescribing	• PrescribeIT

Have a resource or story to share? Email us at improve@afhto.ca

We are continuously updating our website with COVID-19 information click here to read more.