

Virtual Appointment Practice Guidelines - March 16, 2020

*Includes any type of intervention with a patient who is remotely located from the Practitioner providing the service.

In response to the global pandemic declaration by the World Health Organization, implementation of these guidelines when providing care via telephone in your Clinics is necessary:

- Use professional judgement to determine whether patient consult via telephone is appropriate in a particular case
- Ensure the physical setting in which the care is provided provides for confidentiality
- Ensure patient safety by being aware of patient's location and proximity of services
- Request patient's next of kin or alternate support person in the case of an emergency.
- During telephone appointments we are unable to complete a physical assessment therefore, we are relying on the patient to provide us accurate information. Keeping this in mind, documentation is **vital**.
- Call 911 or follow standard emergency protocols for an immediate emergency response as needed.

THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL MUST	DOCUMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Talk directly to the patient ✓ Ensure consent is received ✓ Allow for adequate "talk time" ✓ Collect adequate data ✓ Adhere to clinic protocols ✓ Avoid leading questions ✓ Avoid medical jargon ✓ Avoid accepting patient self-diagnosis ✓ Avoid stereotyping callers or problems ✓ Be sensitive to language and cultural barriers ✓ Provide alternative care options if it is difficult to effectively communicate with the patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Date and time of call ✓ Patients name and birth date (patient identifier) ✓ Address (patient identifier) ✓ Phone number ✓ Information received ✓ Advice and information given ✓ Plan for follow up (plan of care) ✓ Signature of the healthcare professional ✓ Consent has been received

If there is a need to leave a voicemail message follow the below guidelines:

- If voicemail does not state name, do not leave a message, log date/time of call and call back when able.
- If voicemail states a general family name, or multiple names that matches, leave only your name, number, and request the patient (FIRST NAME ONLY) call you back (no organizational details left).
- If it is clearly the right number, leave message with FIRST NAME OF PATIENT ONLY (not surname)
- My name is FIRST NAME OF EMPLOYEE ONLY (do not provide your surname)
- I am calling from NAME OF Family Practice/Chronic Disease management clinic. Please call me back at your earliest convenience at the following number (PROVIDE YOUR DIRECT PHONE NUMBER IF AVAILABLE)

Guiding Resources and Suggested Reading:

- [NSHA Patient Identification Policy](#)
- [NSHA Privacy and Confidentiality of Personal Health Information Policy](#)
- [Practice Guidelines for Nurses: Telenursing](#) – Nova Scotia College of Nursing
- [Virtual Practice Policy](#) – Nova Scotia Dietetic Association
- [Using Digital and Virtual Tools during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), Ontario MD, March, 2020.
- [Professional Standards Regarding the Provision of Telemedicine Services](#), College of Physician and Surgeons of Nova Scotia, December 14, 2018.
- [Technology in Social Work Practice](#) – Nova Scotia College of Social Workers