

Telehealth Message for Physiotherapists

As the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the health and safety of our customers, partners and employees is a top priority for us. We are working to support best practice in clinical care and are following the advice of provincial health officials.

To support our customers' recovery during this time, we will continue to temporarily fund telehealth sessions, until further notice. As customer safety and injury rehabilitation are of utmost importance, treatment providers will continue to be held to appropriate standards. Physiotherapy services must be delivered by approved and qualified providers on an as-needed and 1:1 basis according to college and association guidelines and in accordance with our requirements.

Telehealth, for the purposes of this policy, includes telephone and video technology, and may include two types of sessions:

- Telehealth sessions which deliver the same quality content and have at least the same duration as a standard in-person treatment can be billed as a "standard treatment" under the regulated rate.
- Telehealth sessions of a shortened duration or containing lesser content than a standard in-person session can be billed as "prorated telehealth" sessions (please refer to the [telehealth invoicing FAQ](#)).

Treatment sessions that are necessary to provide therapeutic benefit to customers during the COVID-19 pandemic may be delivered as a telehealth session. Telehealth services may be deemed appropriate in situations where the therapeutic goals are primarily addressed by:

- Active exercise
- Functional progression
- Education
- Self management
- Self mobilization
- Monitoring (such as for external signs of swelling, redness, etc.)

Assessment services may be conducted via telehealth, in accordance with the [College of Physical Therapists of B.C.](#) guidelines. In these cases, "Telehealth assessment" must be noted under "Significant objective findings: observations" with any additional notes related to the assessment and findings.

All physiotherapists providing telehealth services must review the Physiotherapy Association of British Columbia's (PABC) Virtual Care & Telerehabilitation Guide.

Measures must be in place to protect the safety of the customer's physical self, as well as their personal information. To provide telehealth services to our customers, you must adhere to the following three principles:

- 1) **Patient Safety:** Every effort should be made to ensure customers have another individual present in their vicinity during telehealth sessions. If it is not possible, and clinical judgement concludes that sessions are safe to proceed, the health care provider must:

- Obtain the customer's alternate contact information (outside of the telehealth medium).
 - Confirm an emergency contact (care provider, family member, etc.).
 - Document the local emergency services contact information in advance of any telehealth sessions.
- 2) **Appropriate Technical Solution:** To protect customers' information, telehealth must only be delivered via appropriate applications and solutions. Where services are delivered by a means other than telephone, providers must ensure that:
- Telehealth is delivered using a confirmed, secure, authenticated and encrypted application.
Note: Skype, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Facebook Messenger and other consumer-grade applications are not considered secure or appropriate for medical care.
 - Information recorded or noted during the session is stored in compliance with applicable privacy legislation and regulations, and that any appropriate consent has been obtained.
- 3) **Consent:** Customers must understand how telehealth services are delivered so they can make an informed decision regarding whether to receive care in this way. Before providing telehealth services, you must:
- Ensure the customer has received a written description of the telehealth service.
 - Obtain and document the customer's informed consent to participate in telehealth sessions.

Approved and qualified providers must deliver quality content and submit appropriate billings.

Rehabilitation Assistant Services

Rehabilitation assistants under the supervision of a physiotherapist may continue to provide previously established services for existing patients using the telehealth medium. All authorizations for funding must follow normal funding approval processes. The telehealth policy does not extend to rehabilitation assistants engaging with new patients.

Any person acting under the supervision of a Physiotherapist must adhere to the standards of our Telehealth Policy in providing and invoicing services delivered via telehealth. It is critical that the physiotherapist uses discretion in determining what services are safe and appropriate for delivery via telehealth platforms, and which are suitable for delivery by an assigned individual. It is also essential that:

- the physiotherapist is aware of the scheduled rehabilitation assistant session,
- the physiotherapist is available in real time to support the rehabilitation assistant, and
- the rehabilitation assistant understands how and when to contact the physiotherapist, particularly in case of an emergency.

Both the physiotherapist and the rehabilitation assistant must abide by the college's practice standards. All assigned duties must be clearly documented and appropriately communicated to ICBC. Services must be billed in accordance with established [rates and guidelines](#).



We thank you for your diligence and support in protecting customer safety, and encourage you to regularly visit our [COVID-19 updates page](#) to stay up to date on any further developments. If you have any questions about the alternate procedures in place during the pandemic, please contact the **Health Care Inquiry Unit:**

- [Health care provider inquiry and feedback form](#)
- **Phone:** 604-587-7150
- **Toll free:** 1-888-717-7150
- **Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8:30a.m. – 4:00p.m. PST