

Integrating virtual care in practice



Practice Standards & Professional Guidelines

Virtual care continues to be an important component in medical practice and its evolution over the last two years has brought increased access to care for patients. However, while virtual care can act as an effective screening tool or improve efficiency with simple concerns, required in-person assessments cannot be replaced.

There are growing concerns from patients that they cannot easily get an in-person visit, and recent complaints have demonstrated that some registrants are not complying with aspects of the [Virtual Care](#) practice standard. Most complaints about virtual care relate to a lack of in-person options, even with the shift to a post-pandemic care environment. Patients have raised concerns that there were delays in their care as they were required to book online first, and then were not able to book an in-person visit in a timely matter. Additionally, patients have said they were not adequately assessed over the phone and felt that even a video call would have been preferred.

Registrants have also shared frustrations about colleagues who are not assessing their patients adequately through a virtual-only visit. As use of virtual-only services increases, registrants are reminded of the importance of a physical assessment prior to making a specialist referral. And, concerns have been raised by registrants working in emergency rooms who have seen an increase

in patients with misdiagnosed illnesses or delays in treatment due to inadequate virtual assessments.

The College continues to appreciate the adaptability and innovation when it comes to the provision of virtual care. As this type of care continues to change, however, it is important to have an integrated approach to virtual care and ensure its use is always in the best interest of the patient.

Questions related to the *Virtual Care* practice standard may be directed to communications@cpsbc.ca.