

# Enabling and expanding the implementation of virtual care in Canada

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Sept. 10, 2021

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# Objectives

- Briefly highlight the CMA's work to support the implementation of virtual care
- Share the physician perspective on using virtual care in a rural and remote setting
- Review survey data on physician and patient use of virtual care options throughout the pandemic
- Explore the role of the federal government and stakeholders in improving and expanding virtual care throughout Canada



# VIRTUAL CARE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCALING UP  
VIRTUAL MEDICAL SERVICES

REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL CARE  
TASK FORCE

FEBRUARY 2020



A roadmap to  
expanding virtual  
care services in  
Canada...

# VIRTUAL CARE PLAYBOOK

MARCH 2020

# VIRTUAL CARE GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

JUNE 2020



## A sudden switch...

Supporting patients and physicians throughout the pandemic



# **A pediatrician in the North: My own experience with virtual care**

## Public support for virtual care

As of May 2020, almost half of all Canadians:

- had seen a physician virtually
- were highly satisfied with the results – 91% satisfaction rate
- would prefer virtual as the first point of contact with their doctor moving forward

## Physician support for virtual care

- As of April 2021, 94% of physicians surveyed reported that they currently provide virtual care
  - 93% offered telephone consults
  - 51% offered video visits
  - 36% provided services via secure email or messaging
  - 5% used remote patient and home health monitoring
- Survey also shows an increase in the use of electronic medical records

## Physician satisfaction with virtual care

- Physicians reported being generally satisfied with virtual care options
- Physicians reported that virtual care:
  - helped improve patient access
  - enabled higher quality care
  - ensured more efficient care
  - could be integrated into their workflow



## In-person vs. virtual visits

- ~50% of patients are currently seen in person

Versus:

- ~40% by telephone
- ~10% by video
- >2% by email/secure messaging

## Limitations of virtual care

- Virtually examining patients
- Balancing in-person visits with virtual care
- Technological limitations
- Patients' preference for in-person care
- Inability of some patients/communities to access virtual care
  - Due to e.g., low technology literacy, language barriers, low income, remote locations



**Where do we go from here?**

- 1. Virtual care services must be fully integrated across the health and social care system**

**2. Virtual care must be permanently established within  
Canada's publicly funded health care system**

- 3. Physicians and other care providers must be prepared, through education and training, to be leaders of digital health transformation**



**4. Promoting digital literacy and guaranteeing affordable and reliable Internet access must be priorities**

- 5. A set of pan-Canadian standards for patient health information access must be put in place**



- 6. A pan-Canadian framework to regulate the safety and quality of virtual care services must be put in place**

**7. A national licensure system for physicians should be explored and supported**

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