

Evolving landscape of health care

Access to quality healthcare remains a challenge for many Canadians. Many individuals do not have a family doctor, and for those that do, it can be up to a week to get an appointment. If you are lucky enough to get an appointment, you then often have to take time away from work since family doctors only operate during “normal business hours”. Sound familiar?

Virtual care has secured an important role health management over the last two years, spurred on largely by the global pandemic. Studies show that 70% of all health issues seen by a general practitioner can be handled very effectively through virtual care, such as:

- ✓ Prescription refills
- ✓ Lab and imaging requisitions
- ✓ Specialist referrals
- ✓ Cold, flu, bronchitis
- ✓ Eye & Ear infections
- ✓ Mental health issues
- ✓ Minor injuries (such as sprains and burns)
- ✓ Headaches & migraines
- ✓ Skin conditions

These platforms offer 24/7 365 access to quality medical care virtually over a smart phone or computer, wherever and whenever you may need it. No more sitting in a waiting room for an hour or more to see a doctor! You simply log into the system, answer some basic questions regarding the nature of your visit, and then you will be assigned an appointment with the medical practitioner. Often appointments are immediate or within the hour.

Most employers are electing to provide virtual care services as part of their employee benefits offering due to the huge times savings. Many individuals are using the

- **40%** of Canadians report it takes them **6+ days** to get an appointment with a doctor
- **20%** of BC residents do not have a primary health provider
- **40%** of those that visited an emergency department reported that their condition could have been treated elsewhere, but timely access to care was the reason they sought out emergency services.
- **43%** of Canadians who needed help for mental health did not get care.

Statistics provided by Sun Life as part of their Bright Paper on Virtual Care (Sept 2021)

services outside of working hours (evenings, weekends), resulting in better health outcomes while reducing overall absenteeism.

Virtual care will never replace the need for the family doctor. But rather frees up their time to focus on larger medical concerns. Virtual services have secured a vital role in the Canadian health care system and we definitely expect this evolution to continue in the years to come!