

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