

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Health PEI Primary Care Physicians

FROM: Dr. Kiley O'Neill and Christina Phillips,
Project Co-Leads, Unaffiliated Patients Virtual Care

DATE: June 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Virtual Walk-in Clinics for Unaffiliated Patients

Our COVID-19 response shone the light on many things within our health-care system. We were reminded about how important access to primary care is for Islanders, and this became especially challenging for those without access to a family physician or nurse practitioner.

Health PEI and the Government of Prince Edward Island has secured funding from Infoway Canada to improve patient access through innovative virtual care programs. Part of these funds were already used to launch [Zoom for Healthcare](#).

The funds will now be directed to launching a new interim virtual care platform to improve primary care access for unaffiliated Islanders.

This project will focus on offering unaffiliated patients access to family physicians virtually, using the Maple platform (Maple has launched two other virtual pilot projects on PEI). In essence, it is a virtual walk-in clinic, where PEI physicians make themselves available on a flexible basis to see unaffiliated patients. The program is intended to be an interim care option as part of our pandemic response (June 2020 – March 31, 2021).

We understand there are many moving parts in how we are responding to COVID-19, adapting to the reality of how health care is now provided and trying to personally adjust to these changes. As we launch this project, we will be doing so with the goal to further learn how virtual care can play a role in our long-term strategy. While this project may help close some gaps, we know recruiting more family physicians to provide primary care across the Island is of the highest need.

Our first step in launching this program is to understand if you, as a primary care practitioner, would like to be involved. The model allows for flexibility to accommodate your schedule. To help us gauge both your capacity and interest in participating in the program can you please answer this short survey:

[Unaffiliated Virtual Care Clinic Survey](#)

Please NOTE: This survey is only intended to help us gauge interest. You are not obligated to commit based on your responses here as we understand more details on the implementation will need to be shared first.

We will also be holding a WebEx meeting with Maple representatives within the coming days to provide more information. An invitation will be provided with a link to the meeting in a follow-up email this week.

The goal is to launch the program in July. Between now and then the project team plans to:

- Identify physicians willing to provide some support to the virtual care platform;
- Determine a phased in approach for the inclusion of both participating providers and unaffiliated patients
- Determine a path to onboarding and training physicians in a way that is not burdensome and makes it simple to incorporate into your practice
- Determine best ways to ensure unaffiliated patients most in need are aware of the service;
- Put in place necessary supports (technology, fee codes) to support implementation.

Thank you in advance for sharing your thoughts on this new pilot project. Never before have we worked within a system that has been changing so quickly and providing care options and solutions that were in the near past only talked about. We appreciate your support and flexibility as we continue to test care models with a goal to improve both your options in providing care and patients access to you.