

COVID-19 AND TELEREHABILITATION

As the situation around COVID-19 evolves, physical therapists may be considering offering physical therapy services to some clients via telerehabilitation when appropriate. To ensure ongoing compliance with College regulations and standards, registrants should review the following information when considering this option for their clients.

Resources available:

- College website – COVID-19 related resources
- Advice to Consider – Telerehabilitation
- Recorded webinar – Telerehabilitation: What Registrants Should Know
- CPTBC and PABC – Resources for Telerehabilitation Success (Interactive PDF)

Considerations:

Whether providing physical therapy services in-person or via telerehabilitation, the same rules apply. In other words, College regulation applies whenever a physical therapist provides physical therapy services in BC. Standard: Client Assessment, Diagnosis, Interventions describes the requirement for a physical examination appropriate to the presenting symptoms. This Standard may be easier to meet if you have assessed the client in person and offer follow up services via telerehabilitation, or if the presenting condition makes it possible to conduct an appropriate physical assessment via telerehabilitation.

According to Bylaw and Standard: Fees and Billing, receipts must not be misleading and must be transparent. Best practice is to disclose on receipts that physical therapy services were delivered via telerehabilitation. Clients should be advised in advance to check with their insurance provider to confirm services provided by telerehabilitation are covered by their plan.

It will be important to determine on a case by case basis whether or not it is appropriate to deliver physical therapy services to a specific client via telerehabilitation and the importance of documenting your clinical decision making about proceeding (or not) with service delivery via telerehabilitation. As the COVID-19 situation evolves you may determine that you will proceed with follow up telerehab services for someone who is quarantined, who you would otherwise only be willing to treat in person (for example a follow up

visit for a previously assessed post-operative client to provide education and home exercise progression), who would typically need hands-on treatment techniques. There may also be clients where the physical therapist determines they are unable to safely provide care without the ability to conduct a hands-on physical assessment and/or treatment. The importance of making decisions with the client interest at the forefront is key, and documentation in the clinical record provides evidence of your decision making around the provision of physical therapy services in the context of COVID-19.