

Guidelines for the Provision of Telerehabilitation

The Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (CAPR) has compiled [resources related to providing physical therapy services to clients in another Canadian jurisdiction](#), either in person or via telerehabilitation. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by ten provincial regulators which outlines the circumstances in which physical therapy services can and cannot be provided across jurisdictions. If you are a BC registrant considering providing services in person or via telerehabilitation to a client outside of BC (or conversely, if you are a registrant outside of BC considering providing services in person or via telerehabilitation to a client within BC) you must review these guidelines and ensure that you are **registered to practice in the jurisdiction where your client is located**.

If you are a BC registrant considering offering telerehabilitation services to clients within BC, you should stop and consider a number of things regarding the service you will provide. Before offering this service to your clients, be sure that you are able to offer it in a way that is in compliance with all of the CPTBC regulations and practice standards, just as you should when providing in-person care.

A few things to keep in mind:

- The expectations as defined in the [Standards of Practice](#) and [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) apply regardless of whether you provide physical therapy services via telerehabilitation or through in-person client interactions.
- You should use professional judgement to determine on a case-by-case basis whether telerehabilitation is an appropriate modality to deliver services to your client. This determination should be made based on client condition and preference, available technology, risks, and benefits.
- You should consider whether you will be able to deliver substantively similar care by telerehabilitation as you could in person, and whether hands-on assessment/treatment is required for this client in order to be sure you are offering competent and safe physical therapy care.
- Ensure that telerehabilitation does not expose your client to greater risk than other possible service delivery methods. You should consider any risks to the privacy of the client's health information or risks to their safety depending on the physical environment.

- Ensure you and your client are competent in using the technology. You should understand the system's capabilities and limitations and have technology support available if needed. You are responsible for assuring the technological proficiency of those involved in the client's care. You should also ensure that the client has suitable access to the technology.
- Make sure you have informed the client of the process to follow if they have a concern or complaint about their physical therapy care. If the matter cannot be addressed directly, the client should know they have the option to raise their concerns with CHCPBC.
- If you are involving a physical therapist support worker in the provision of physical therapy services, remember that just as when providing services in person, you are accountable for the care provided, and you are responsible to assign tasks to the physical therapist support worker and to follow the Practice Standards related to supervision and documentation.

Consent Issues

- In delivering telerehabilitation services, you have to be able to verify the identity of the client, other care providers, and any support personnel involved. Be sure to document the verification policy and processes used.
- You should augment your informed consent processes as required to support telerehabilitation.
 - Clients should be made aware of any limitations that telerehabilitation service presents as compared to an in-person encounter for that client's situation, such as the inability to perform hands-on examination, assessment, and treatment.
 - Consent should be obtained for videotaping, recording, or storing information and data from the telerehabilitation session, for the transmission of information via telerehabilitation technologies, and for the participation of other health care providers or the client's family in the provision of care.

Privacy Requirements

- You should ensure compliance with all privacy and security requirements, both during telerehabilitation sessions and when in contact with the client through other electronic means, such as arranging appointments via email or text. You should document privacy and security measures. Consider topics such as authentication and encryption technology, secure transmission systems, and storage mechanisms.

- Written policies and procedures should be maintained at the same standard as in-person encounters for documentation, maintenance, and transmission of the records of the encounter using telerehabilitation technologies.
- You should ensure that there are guidelines in place to ensure that client records cannot be accessed by unauthorized users, tampered with or destroyed, and are protected at both the originating and remote sites.
- You should secure the devices used in telerehabilitation and when storing information related to telerehabilitation services. Make sure you understand whether and where any information is being stored on a cloud server when you meet with your client remotely.
- You should be aware of any employer policies for privacy and security for the use of telerehabilitation as a treatment modality.

Safety Considerations

- You should have a safety protocol in place in the event of an emergency or adverse event (for example, client medical emergency such as a heart attack or a fall).
- You should establish an alternative method of contacting the client and the client should be provided with an alternate way of contacting you. For example, in the case of internet failure, you should have a way to telephone the client.
- You should ensure access to appropriate technical support for troubleshooting in the event of difficulty with the technology. It is also recommended that all technologies are trialled prior to client appointments to ensure good functioning of the system.