



# Virtual Care

## Applies to Physical Therapists

The College of Health and Care Professionals of BC was created on June 28, 2024 through the amalgamation of seven health regulatory colleges:

- College of Dietitians of British Columbia
- College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Optometrists of British Columbia
- College of Opticians of British Columbia
- College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Psychologists of British Columbia
- College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia

All current requirements for standards of clinical and ethical practice issued by the seven colleges remain in place upon amalgamation.

This document was created by the College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia and will be updated to reflect the amalgamation.

## STANDARD

Physical therapists incorporate virtual care in the delivery of quality, effective physical therapy services in accordance with client preferences, and as indicated and appropriate to address client needs.

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

Clients can expect that virtual physical therapy services are appropriate, safe, and effective.

## PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

### The physical therapist:

1. Is aware that virtual care is a method of physical therapy service delivery that is subject to the same standards of practice and professional expectations as in-person physical therapy service delivery.
2. Possesses sufficient training, knowledge, judgment, and competency (including technological competency) to manage client care virtually.
3. Employs reasonable safeguards (physical, technical, and administrative) to protect the privacy and security of client information.
4. Has a professional, private location from which to provide virtual care.
5. Confirms that adequate technology and supports are available to the client to enable virtual care.
6. Confirms that the client has reliable internet access or phone connection and a private location from which to receive virtual care and if a private location is not available:
  - 6.1 takes reasonable action to manage client privacy;
  - 6.2 confirms client understanding of privacy risks within the available location and client informed consent to proceed with virtual care despite these risks.
7. Assesses the appropriateness of virtual care, considering:
  - 7.1 the client's circumstances and preferences for physical therapy service delivery;
  - 7.2 the client's diagnosis and treatment plan;
  - 7.3 the physical therapist's ability to provide appropriate assessment and treatment of the client's condition using virtual methods of physical therapy service delivery;
  - 7.4 adaptations required to physical therapy services to reflect virtual care considerations and constraints;
  - 7.5 relevant enabling or limiting factors that affect the ability to provide safe and effective virtual care.
8. Obtains the client's informed consent specific to virtual physical therapy service delivery, including informing the client of:
  - 8.1 any relevant limitations to physical therapy service options available through virtual care;
  - 8.2 safety risks specific to virtual care;
  - 8.3 privacy risks specific to virtual care and the method of virtual care delivery.
9. Documents the location of the client in the client record for each interaction.
10. Identifies risks related to virtual physical therapy service provision.
11. Employs measures to mitigate risks specific to virtual care.

12. Develops client safety incident management plans specific to the client for potential adverse events considering the physical therapy services provided virtually and the client's context.
13. Discontinues virtual physical therapy services and refers for in-person service provision when virtual physical therapy services pose an undue risk to the client's safety or are ineffective or inappropriate for the client's situation and/or condition.

**Regarding the provision of virtual care across Canadian jurisdictional borders, the physical therapist:**

14. Advises the client of where the physical therapist is licensed, their options for reporting complaints and concerns, and how to contact the regulatory organizations in the event of an issue, concern, or complaint.
15. Is aware of and complies with licensing requirements in the jurisdiction where the client is located, in addition to the physical therapist's primary or home jurisdiction if those two jurisdictions are different.

## RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- Assessment, Diagnosis, Treatment
- Informed Consent
- Risk Management and Safety