Handout

Virtual Care Tips from your colleagues:

1. You can do this! Yes, it is different from what you are used to, but it can work really well.

2. Make sure to get assistance. Privacy and security are extremely important. If you use other software or apps: they need to be on Canadian servers, FIPPA and PIPA compliant, encrypted. If you use your phone you can hide caller ID.

3. Check the new billing codes.

4. **Technology may fail:**
   - Have a backup virtual platform (e.g. Zoom, doxy.me, etc.)
   - Use a phone.
   - If you are getting a broken-up signal, try turning off the video.
   - Restart might be needed. If the video or audio suddenly drops when it had been working before, use the chat feature to ask them to leave the meeting and then re-join, or if this still doesn't work, reboot their computer and re-join.
   - Use your smartphone's hotspot feature if the internet isn't working. You can run some EMRs all day on a hotspot connection without using much data (but do watch your data)!
   - Use hardwire internet connection where possible, the bandwidth is usually better than wireless.

5. **Virtual visits can take longer because of new technology.**
   - Assist patients with technology if needed.
     - o Arrange for a more tech-savvy person to be in the room with the patient you suspect may have trouble connecting.
     - o Be prepared to walk through the problem the patient is having connecting to the platform.
     - o Don't spend too long trying to fix a problem. Go to the phone.
   - Test out the technology with non-patients to become comfortable with it.
   - Have an agenda set up for the virtual encounter, EMR templates that help guide a conversation, provide access through links to patient and/or provider resources or clinical decision tools are very helpful.
   - Optimize your EMR for telemedicine:
     - o Create visit templates or macros for common things to document.
     - o Use CDM coordinators, PSP coaches, or peer mentors to conduct your own EMR queries and searches, and/or dashboards to identify important chronic disease care gaps (see Office Preparation in COVID-19 times document).
   - Consider using apps for remote collaboration and to stay in contact (e.g. EMR messaging, WhatsApp or Google docs for non-clinical information).

6. **Optimize the video/visual environment:**
   a. Use two computer monitors whenever possible: EMR window on one monitor and the virtual video window on the other monitor.
   b. If only one monitor, you can use a laptop or a tablet as the second screen.
   c. Laptops can be useful because they typically have built-in video cameras, speakers and microphones – although the quality can be lower. You can get multi-port adapters for laptops that allow you to plug in another screen to the laptop. Many laptops have this connection ability built in.
   d. Your webcam or built-in camera should be on, or above the monitor displaying the patient's image. This view is the easiest way to promote the appearance of eye contact.
   e. Remember, not everyone has a video camera or the skills to use one.

7. **Optimize the audio experience:**
   a. An over the ear headset can be cumbersome, consider using earbud headphones.
      i. Bose QuietComfort or SoundSport work really well, stay in the ear, and have good sound quality.
      ii. Jabra 45 single ear wireless earplug is comfortable and has good sound quality.
      iii. Jabra 65T stereo wireless earplugs have good noise cancelling, wind sound supressing qualities, but may not fit as well as the above two headsets.
   b. For a desktop microphone/speaker, Jabra 510 works well for conferences with more than one person in the room.
   c. If there is more than one person in the virtual meeting and there is a lot of background noise, ask anyone not speaking to mute their microphone.

8. **Using cell phones:**
   - Using a cell phone can be better than using a phone in the office for several reasons:
      i. You can dial using voice commands (Siri, OK Google, etc.).
      ii. You can connect earbuds for better sound than using the speaker phone.
      iii. It doesn't use up an office phone line.
   - You can easily hide your number from caller ID.
      - For iPhone:
         ○ For just one call - dial **#31#** followed by the number you want to dial
         ○ For a series of outgoing calls, dial ***#31#** followed by the dial button. Then hang up and all calls thereafter will be caller ID blocked. (I recommend doing this at the beginning of a series of calls). To reverse this, go to settings--> pull down to the search bar and enter "caller id" --> turn on the toggle to "show my caller id". Or, go to Settings > Phone > Hide my Caller ID
      - For Android:
         ○ Settings > Call > Additional > Caller ID > Hide Number (to reverse choose "Show number" or "Network default" to resume showing your number.
   b. For numbers that don't accept "No caller ID" calls, you will need to decide if you will revel your number. You could always block the number later.

9. **Text Messaging:**
   Text messaging from your cell phone, even with the caller ID blocked as described above, exposes your caller ID to the text recipient.
   - If you want to text message, install a text messaging program on your computer or smartphone and text from this app.
   - Send text messages informing patients about upcoming appointment or for other urgent messages.

10. **Emails:**
    a. Email can be used to communicate with patients, including sharing the virtual care platform links and tech tips. ([Download Doctors Technology Office toolkit)](#)

11. **Consent:**
    - Physicians providing health care services via telemedicine should obtain patient consent for this specific purpose.
    a. CMPA recommends the use of a signed informed consent form. Download: [PDF file](#) or [Word file](#).
    b. *Verbal consent can also be used just make sure to document it in the patient's chart*
       Documentation of Verbal Consent
       Informed verbal consent was obtained from this patient to communicate and provide care using virtual and other telecommunications tools. The risks related to unauthorized disclosure or interception of personal health information has been explained to the patient and they have been informed about steps they can take to help protect their information. We have discussed that care provided through video or audio communication cannot replace the need for physical examination or an in-person visit for some disorders or urgent problems. The patient understands the need to seek urgent care in an emergency department if necessary.

12. Consider using **Chromium based browsers**: Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge or Brave.
    a. Brave may have the best privacy settings and may be faster than either of the others in certain situations.
    b. It's likely that Health Authority computers will only have Chrome installed.

13. **eFaxing:**
    See the DTO Information document on eFaxing: [Download Guide.](#)
    Protect Your Privacy
    - Maintain privacy, especially if you are faxing sensitive information. If you are using a third-party fax machine be aware of your surroundings and of others around you while faxing personal documents. Do not leave documents unattended.
    - Include a cover sheet, clearly identify the sender with your contact information and the intended recipient contact information.
      - Note on the cover sheet the total number of pages being sent.
      - Include a confidentiality clause instructing anyone who receives the fax in error to immediately notify the sender and then return or securely destroy the faxed documentation.

- Some fax machines print the first page as a confirmation – having a cover sheet protects any personal information that may be on the first page of your actual document from being viewed in the confirmation print out.

Check Your Contact Information

- Confirm you have the correct fax number of your intended recipient.
- Carefully check the fax number you dialed before sending the fax, dialing a wrong fax number can accidentally send sensitive personal information to the wrong destination.
- If your fax machine has pre-programmed fax numbers, check them for accuracy.

Verify Transmission

- Once a fax transmission is complete, verify all pages were transmitted and sent to the right place, see the fax confirmation report for this information.
- When using e-faxing services, you may need to check with the receiver of the information to make sure all pages were transmitted. Unlike a traditional fax machine, e- faxing does not track and record each page sent. Because of various transmission practices, it is possible the fax is not received instantaneously.
- Fax services (like E-Fax, MyFax) often keep logs and records of documents and corresponding information sent and received. It is important to carefully read the privacy, retention, and access policies of the service provider so that you understand the limits of their protections.
- Keep your fax confirmation receipt/report/sheet for your files.
- Third party fax machines may save/store your personal information with your fax transmission. Check with the company who provides the fax service as to whether their fax machine retains your information.
- Fax transmissions, like telephone calls, can be tapped and monitored.
- If you fax sensitive personal information, consider using secure fax machines that employ encryption or other security measures.
- Do not make or keep extra copies of faxed document, securely destroy extra copies.