

Provision of Publicly Funded Virtual Health Services

The policy for publicly funded virtual health services has been published on the NS Department of Health and Wellness website. This policy applies to all publicly funded services funded by the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), and the IWK Health Centre (IWK) as they exercise their interdependent statutory mandates, as outlined under the Public Service Act, the Health Services Insurance Act, and the Health Authorities Act.

Virtual Health Care

Virtual health care is defined in the policy to be any interactions between patients and/or members of their circle of care, occurring remotely, using synchronous or asynchronous forms of communication.

Synchronous methods of virtual care (e.g., real-time telephone or *Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA, 2010) compliant video platforms such as Telehealth or Zoom for Healthcare) are permitted for the use and billing in accordance with the policy. Asynchronous methods of virtual care, such as secure messaging through an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) are permitted for use in accordance with the policy. However, asynchronous methods of virtual care are not approved for billing within Nova Scotia at this time.

The full policy can be accessed here:

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/Provision-of-Publicly-Funded-Virtual-Health-Services.pdf>

Please read the policy carefully- Appendix 2 includes some provisions specific to physicians providing virtual services. While this policy has been in effect since March 2021, physician adherence to this policy is effective September 16, 2021.