

BEYOND ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN PRIMARY CARE

BC family physicians are beginning to expand in-person services beyond those deemed essential during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [BC Health Quality Matrix](#) provides a framework to consider the benefits and risks of providing in-person or virtual care for individual patients. [Determining clinical appropriateness for virtual care visits](#) provides more decision-making support.

Safety



- Your own health, risk factors and personal circumstances
- Your individual patient's health, risk factors and personal circumstances
- Your COVID-19 Safety plan, including the amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) in your clinic

Respect & Appropriateness



- Your patient's physical, mental or cognitive impairments
- Your patient's and family/caregiver's ability/experience using technology
- Your patient's preferences regarding virtual care and/or in-person care

Efficiency



- Frequency of in-person and virtual visits
- Capacity to address multiple issues in a single in-person visit
- Decreased face-to-face time by assessing patient concerns virtually prior to in-person care

Accessibility



- Ease with which your patients can contact the office
- Availability of timely appointments
- Relative availability of in-person and virtual care appointments in your clinic

Effectiveness



- How much an in-person visit will improve your patient's health outcomes
- How much an in-person visit might prevent missed or delayed diagnosis
- If your patient's primary care needs can or cannot be deferred

Equity



- Your patient's access, ability and comfort to use virtual care technology
- Your patient's social and cultural barriers to care
- Your patient's personal and economic barriers to in-person visits (childcare, work, transportation)