

SCPT Practice Guideline # 24 - Telerehabilitation

Background:

The Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists (SCPT) acknowledges the important role of telerehabilitation in providing effective and accessible care for physical therapy clients in the province of Saskatchewan. This Practice Guideline applies to within province provision of telerehabilitation services as well as cross border provision of telerehabilitation services.

Telerehabilitation Definition:

Refers to the provision of physiotherapy services which involves communication with a patient who is remotely located from the primary physiotherapist providing service. It can include mediums but is not limited to as videoconferencing, email, apps, web-based communication, wearable technology. Personnel may or may not be present with the patient. All of the professional behaviors involved in the exchange of information are the same as if the patient is in direct contact with the Physical Therapist.

The SCPT Code of Ethics provides that:

3. Physical therapists must respect the client's right to be informed about the effects of treatment and inherent risks.
4. Physical therapists must give clients the opportunity to consent or decline treatment or alterations in the treatment regime and must obtain consent before providing any treatment or alterations in the treatment regime.
6. Physical therapists shall assume full responsibility for all care they provide.
10. Physical therapists shall respect all client information as confidential and shall not communicate client information to any person without the consent of the client except when required by law.
14. Physical therapists shall comply with all laws and bylaws pertaining to the practice of physical therapy.

Practice Guidelines:

- Physical therapists shall be registered as a member of the physiotherapy regulatory body in the jurisdiction where the physiotherapist resides and where the majority of their patients are physically situated ("Primary Jurisdiction").¹⁰
- Physical therapists who intend to provide cross border telerehabilitation services shall be registered as a member of the physiotherapy regulatory body in all other jurisdictions where the patients who are receiving physiotherapy services directly from the physiotherapist are physically located "Secondary Jurisdiction(s)".¹⁰
- Physical therapists shall ensure they meet, and are practicing in compliance with, all regulatory and registration requirements in both the primary and secondary jurisdictions when providing cross border telerehabilitation. ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14}

- Physical therapists shall adhere to the expectations outlined in the Physical Therapists Act, Regulatory Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and applicable practice guidelines in the provision of telerehabilitation services.²
- Physical therapists shall ensure that telerehabilitation is the most effective and appropriate method through which to provide physiotherapy services in each individual situation. It must be reasonably expected to lead to the outcomes that are equivalent to any other type of care that can be delivered to the client considering the specific context, location, timing, and availability of services.^{1, 9, 15, 16}
- Physical therapists shall obtain explicit informed consent prior to initiating telerehabilitation services. This consent shall include all typical elements of informed consent, but in addition shall include technological information related to the service, privacy and security of the information as well as possible limitations of technology based patient consultation and any extra risks associated with the intervention.^{2, 3, 7, 15, 16}
- Physical therapists shall ensure that the identity of the client is reliably verified prior to initiating each telerehabilitation session.^{7, 15}
- Physical therapists shall ensure that they clearly identify themselves at the beginning of a telerehabilitation sessions and also shall ensure that they disclose their physical location (primary practicing jurisdiction) to the client.^{2, 7, 9}
- Physical therapists shall ensure compliance with all relevant privacy and security requirements and legislation during the provision of telerehabilitation services. This includes ensuring that technology utilized meets any applicable legal and ethical requirements for confidentiality and security of information.^{2, 4}
- Physical therapists shall ensure the client is aware of the option to discontinue treatment at any time and it is expected that the treating physical therapist will then make a reasonable effort to assist with facilitating in person services for the client when possible and available.¹
- Physical therapists shall review their professional liability coverage carefully with their insurers to ensure coverage is adequate for the provision of telerehabilitation services.
- Physical therapists shall ensure they carefully address any knowledge gaps in relation to software, technology and individual competency levels and shall ensure access to outside technological support as required.⁹
- Physical therapists shall ensure that the technology used is of sufficient quality and reliability to make accurate health care assessments and decisions and to adequately protect the privacy of the client's health information.^{9, 16}
- Physical therapists shall ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place to appropriately manage any clinical, medical, or technical emergencies that may take place during the provision of telerehabilitation services. This includes ensuring necessary procedures are in place to activate emergency in person medical services should this be required.^{15, 16}
- Physical therapists shall be responsible for any delegation of responsibilities to non licensed/regulated individuals as identified in practice guideline numbers fifteen and sixteen.

References

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3. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario –Telemedicine Info Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions
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5. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan Policy – The Practice of Telemedicine
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6. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia – Guidelines for the Provision of Telemedicine Services
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13. Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists Practice Guidelines <http://www.scpt.org/members-area/bylaws-practice-practice-hour-guidelinespolicy-and-position-statements>
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