

# Information Bulletin

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March 17, 2020

## **Attention: Home Care Services Providers**

### **Subject: Program Modifications in Response to COVID-19**

The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is a serious cause for precaution and concern in British Columbia. We are closely following the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) for updates and guidance on infection control procedures, and relating the recommendations to our provider programs.

Given the current circumstances, WorkSafeBC would like to remind our home care provider network the option of re-assessing care needs for workers to what the provider feels is clinically essential in order to maintain worker safety, with Board Officer approval. Limiting home visits to clinically essential services will allow for social distancing, and ensure staffing is available to those who medically require care. We also encourage the use of telehealth options or phone assessments, where deemed clinically appropriate. In light of these times, video functions of platforms such as Skype and Facetime can be suitable solutions where interaction with workers is required or in the best interest of their health and safety.

Although we cannot provide specific advice to Service Providers as to how to meet privacy requirements, we can share some best practices providers need to consider when they decide to use these platforms such as:

- Ensure the device used has been updated to the latest software
- Ensure the device has strong password protection
- Turn cloud services off in order to avoid potential storage or access outside Canada
- Do not use the option to store the full conversation but record only the information required using normal record keeping
- Conduct calls in a private room or setting
- Comply with any professional standards and practice guidance by respective regulatory bodies
- Ensure the worker is comfortable using the service
- Explain there are risks to privacy that may be comparable to use of social media platforms
- Get client consent for the use of the chosen platform

Please note that if an injured worker declines an assessment, or participation in service provision due to concern of exposure to COVID-19, you are to notify the Claim Owner. Lastly, if you have a suspected case of COVID-19 within your workforce, please consult with your local Medical Health Officer for guidance, as well as Health Care Services immediately.

We recognize that this is a rapidly changing environment and we will strive to maintain communication and support to our providers based on the information available. We greatly appreciate your commitment as we work through these difficult times together.