

Information Bulletin

March 18, 2020

Attention: All Health Care Providers

Subject: Response to COVID-19

The evolutions with the COVID-19 pandemic are a cause for precaution and concern in British Columbia. WorkSafeBC is closely following the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) for updates and guidance, and relating the recommendations to the providers of health care services for injured workers.

Given the current circumstances, we understand that some clinics have made the decision to close at this time; WorkSafeBC would like providers to use their discretion in terms of whether or not their clinics remain open. Similarly, injured workers will attend rehabilitation and treatment services, as they feel comfortable. Please note that if an injured worker declines an assessment, or participation in a treatment or service due to concern of exposure to COVID-19, we ask that you please notify their Claim Owner.

For those services that are able to be delivered via TeleHealth, we encourage you to explore this option where clinically appropriate. Health Care Services asks that you consult with your professional governing bodies regarding the guidelines and recommendations for utilization of TeleHealth Services. We ask that you use your discretion, and the guidelines of your respective governing bodies, as to whether TeleHealth usage would be appropriate for a specific service.

In addition to the code of conduct outlined by your regulatory body, WorkSafeBC requests that wherever possible a formal TeleHealth platform is used. Where this is not possible and there is an identified need for TeleHealth to meet the needs of the worker, WorkSafeBC asks first and foremost that you explain the privacy risks to the worker and obtain his/her consent prior to any TeleHealth Service being completed; in such cases please consider the following guidelines:

- 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.

The modifications to service delivery are recommended until further notice.

We appreciate you may have questions regarding payment, given changes to program structure, and we will work to provide answers as able, but ask for your patience as we work through solutions.

If your clinic has closed or will be closing, please notify Health Care Services at HCSINQU@worksafebc.com.

Lastly, if you have a suspected case of COVID-19 at your facility, please review the resources at the following link: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care>, as well as contact Health Care Services immediately at the e-mail address above.

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.

Thank you for the service you provide to our workers, particularly during this incredibly challenging time.