



# Telepractice

## What is telepractice?

Telepractice is the use of telecommunications technology to deliver health-care services at a distance. In this scenario, the RN and the client are not in the same location, but it can also be used to link an RN to another clinician in order to collaborate or consult on client care.

With telepractice, an RN can deliver health-care services to a client or their representative by telephone, video conference or email. It can occur in many practice settings such as a client's home, call centres, ambulatory care clinics, hospital in-patient units, emergency departments, public health branches and more.

## Professional Practice

RNs who provide service by telepractice establish a duty of care or a therapeutic relationship with the client. RNs are responsible and accountable to meet the practice direction *Practice Expectations for RNs* for the services they provide by telepractice.

Telepractice can be a higher-risk practice because it doesn't allow for the same contact as in-person care. Because of this, an RN needs to use their knowledge, skill and judgment while establishing a therapeutic relationship, gathering assessment data and/or providing information to help clients to make informed decisions.

Employer policies set expectations for telepractice and include:

- how to determine if a client's best interests would be served through telepractice, and
- what to do if a client ends the telepractice before the RN is satisfied all concerns have been addressed.

Effective telepractice involves:

- Applying current evidence to inform nursing advice
- Excellent communication and a professional attitude
- Advanced assessment skills
- Judgment, critical thinking and the ability to prioritize
- Crisis intervention skills
- Knowledge of the client population
- Knowledge of current and available resources
- Using skills to identify and prioritize client needs
- Judgment to make safe, effective and appropriate recommendations in a time-limited interaction
- Effective care planning with clients
- Judgment in referral making
- Proper documentation and record keeping
- Resources for the client on how to use telepractice technology

## Telepractice Outside of Manitoba

RNs who provide telepractice to clients living outside of Manitoba must:

- maintain their certificate of practice with the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba,
- contact the regulatory body in the province where the client lives to see if they need to be registered in that jurisdiction before providing health-care services to the client, and
- inform the client of their full name, professional designation and regulatory body.

## For the Public

When working with an RN by telepractice, it's important you ask:

- the RN's name, title and role;
- the RN's contact information and employer;
- what your service expectations should be; and
- the province where the RN is licensed to practise.

## Resources

Canadian Nurses Protective Society (2008). Telephone Advice. InfoLAW, A Legal Information Sheet for Nurses, 6(1).

Van Houwelingen, C. et al. (2016). Competencies required for nursing telehealth activities: A Delphi-study. Nurse Education Today, 39, 50-52.

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