

JUNE 2017

# Respiratory Therapists Providing Telepractice Services

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE



## Definition

“Telepractice” refers to the use of telecommunications technology (e.g., videoconference, telephone, or email) to provide healthcare services (e.g., patient education) at a distance where the healthcare professional and the patient/client are not in same physical location. It may also involve situations where the healthcare service is not being given by the healthcare professional and received by the patient/client at the same time (i.e., not in real-time). Telepractice is intended to improve patient/client access to healthcare services, and has the potential to reduce hospitalizations and healthcare costs<sup>1</sup>.

## CRTO Members

**CRTO Members** who are engaged in telepractice, regardless of where the patient/client is physically located when the service is provided, are responsible for:

- adhering to all Ontario legislative and regulatory requirements that applies to all CRTO Members (e.g., standards of practice, scope of practice, controlled acts authorized to RTs, ethical guidelines, etc.);
- adhering to any specific terms, conditions and limitations on their CRTO certificates of registration;
- determining whether providing their services via telecommunications technology is appropriate for the particular patient/client;
- obtaining informed consent from the patient/client, both for service provided and for the use of telepractice as a means of service provision;
- protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the patient’s/client’s personal health information by taking reasonable steps to confirm the information and communication technology and physical setting being used themselves and by the patient/client permits the sharing of the patient’s personal health information in a private and secure manner (for more information, the RT may contact the [Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario](#) ); and,
- ensuring there is a plan in place for medical emergencies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN). Retrieved from <https://otn.ca/>

**Please Note:**

All CRTO Members are required to maintain Professional Liability Insurance (PLI) coverage in accordance with the [CRTO Professional Liability Insurance Policy](#). When engaged in telepractice, CRTO Members are responsible for ensuring that their own PLI policies offer adequate coverage for that type of service delivery.

In addition, when the telepractice practice involves a patient/client who is a resident of another jurisdiction, the CRTO Member is also responsible for:

- determining whether the jurisdiction permits its residents to receive telepractice services from healthcare providers who are not registered in that jurisdiction and, if they do, whether there are any restrictions place upon their practice; and,
- ensuring that the patient/client is aware that their service is being provided by a healthcare professional who is registered in another jurisdiction, and that if they have any complaint regarding the service, the patient/client should direct their concern to the CRTO.

## Non-Members

RTs from other jurisdictions that provide telepractice services to Ontario residents are expected to adhere to the legislative and regulatory requirements that govern RT practice in Ontario.



**College of Respiratory  
Therapists of Ontario**

---

**Ordre des thérapeutes  
respiratoires de l'Ontario**

This Professional Practice Guideline will be updated as new evidence emerges or as practice evolves. Comments on this guideline are welcome and should be addressed to:

**Manager, Quality Practice**

College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario  
180 Dundas Street West, Suite 2103  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z8

**Phone 416-591-7800**

**Toll Free 1-800-261-0528**

**Fax 416-591-7890**

**E-mail [questions@crto.on.ca](mailto:questions@crto.on.ca)**