

SCPT Practice Resource Telerehabilitation

Standards of Practice for Physical Therapists and Practice Resources

Along with the implementation of the Standards of Practice document (as of September 1, 2022), Practice Guidelines are being transitioned to Practice Resources. Practice Resources are educational documents for physical therapists when considering broader topics that may involve multiple standards or regulations.

As part of the transition, Practice Guidelines will be renamed Practice Resources until they can be incorporated into new revamped Practice Resources.

The Physical Therapists Act and SCPT Bylaws, which includes the Ethical Code, and the Standards of Practice document are the approved documents for physical therapy practice in Saskatchewan providing the foundation for which practitioners are governed within the regulatory environment.

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 Ethical Conduct provides:

A. Responsibilities to the Client

6. Respect the principles of informed consent including by explaining service options, risks, benefits, potential outcomes, possible consequences of refusing treatment or services, and by avoiding coercion.

11. Use electronic communication and social media and other forms of digital technology

professionally and respectfully, conforming to confidentiality guidelines.

12. Practice in a safe, competent, accountable and responsible manner during the provision of services.

14. Take responsibility for the client care delegated to students and other members of the health care team.

18. Comply with all legislation, guidelines, and regulatory requirements that pertain to the profession of physiotherapy.

B. Responsibilities to the Public

4. Work effectively within the health care system and manage resources responsibly.

Practice Resource

- 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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2. College of Physiotherapists of Alberta Telehealth in Physiotherapy – Guidelines for Physiotherapists
3. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario –Telemedicine Info Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions http://www.cpso.on.ca/CPSO/media/documents/Policies/Policy-Items/Telemedicine_InfoSheetFAQs.pdf?ext=.pdf
4. College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia – Professional Standards and Guidelines - Telemedicine <https://www.cpsbc.ca/files/pdf/PSG-Telemedicine.pdf>
5. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan Policy – The Practice of Telemedicine <https://www.cps.sk.ca/iMIS/Documents/Legislation/Policies/POLICY%20-%20The%20Practice%20of%20Telemedicine.pdf>
6. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia – Guidelines for the Provision of Telemedicine Services <https://www.cpsns.ns.ca/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?PortalId=0&TabId=129&EntryId=46>
7. Province of BC Health Authorities – Telehealth Clinical Guidelines http://www.phsa.ca/Documents/Telehealth/TH_Clinical_Guidelines_Sept2015.pdf
8. College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia – Practice Guidelines – Telenursing <https://crnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Telenursing2014.pdf>
9. Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators – Considerations for Telepractice in Physical Therapy in Canada http://www.alliancept.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/alliance_resources_Telepractice_Guide_FINAL_Sept_2006.pdf
10. Memorandum of Understanding – Cross Border Physiotherapy
11. Physical Therapists Act of Saskatchewan <http://www.scpt.org/images/stories/pdfs/P11-11.pdf>
12. Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists Regulatory Bylaws and Code of Ethics http://www.scpt.org/images/stories/pdfs/Regulatory_Bylaw_Amendments_March_2016.pdf
13. Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists Practice Guidelines <http://www.scpt.org/members-area/bylaws-practice-practice-hour-guidelinespolicy-and-position-statements>
14. Saskatchewan College of Psychologists – Model Standards for Telepsychology Service Delivery <http://www.skcp.ca/pdf%20files/telehealth-advisory.pdf>
15. Federation of State Boards in Physical therapy – Telehealth in Physical Therapy Policy Recommendations for Appropriate Regulation <https://www.fsbpt.org/Portals/0/documents/free-resources/TelehealthInPhysicalTherapy2015.pdf>
16. Conseil Interprofessionnel du Quebec – Telepractice and Digital Records Management in the Human Relations Sectors https://professions-quebec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/telepratique_dossier_numerique_english_2016-10-06.pdf