

Information for Service Providers

About the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day Program

The First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program was developed by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in partnership with the Rural Coordination Centre of British Columbia (RCCbc) to make primary care readily available to First Nations people living in BC.

Many First Nations people lack access to culturally safe, primary health care. This has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to First Nations communities temporarily ceasing or reducing operations within their health centres and health stations.

The goals of the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day are to:

- provide regionally-based, virtual primary health care support and delivery to First Nations people and their families living in BC, and
- support community-based nurses and other health professionals to deliver primary care.

Clients call **1.855.344.3800** to book an appointment with a doctor in their region. Each visit is triaged and scheduled by a response group of Medical Office Assistants (MOAs) and takes place using Zoom for Healthcare video conferencing. A simple, one-click process allows the client and doctor to join the conference. MOAs can arrange for phone appointments for clients who do not have access to wi-fi or video conferencing tools.

The service is linked to both ROSe (Rural Outreach Support) and RUDi (Rural Urgent Doctor in need) when urgent/emergent cases arise and a higher level of care is required for the client, or more intensive support is required by the health care provider on the ground.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does this service work?

Clients call 1.855.344.3800 to book an appointment with an MOA, who takes their information and sends an invitation to join the appointment at the scheduled time. Each virtual visit is hosted by Zoom for Healthcare. Clients simply click on the Zoom link from a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet to join the appointment. Phone appointments can be arranged for clients without access to wi-fi or video conferencing tools.

The First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program operates 7 days per week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Clients without phone network access can email virtualdoctor@rccbc.ca to book an appointment.

2. Who is eligible to participate in the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program?

The service is open to all First Nations people living in British Columbia and their family members, even if those family members are non-status.

Doctors must apply to join the program. Preference is given to doctors with Indigenous ancestry and those with positive working relationships with First Nations communities and patients. Participating doctors receive training in the principles and practices of cultural safety and humility.

3. What is the process for applying to become a primary care provider with the program?

For more information on eligibility and the application process, email Jean.Allbeury@fnha.ca.

4. Who coordinates appointments on behalf of participating doctors?

Each First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day appointment is triaged and scheduled by one member of a team of MOAs who enables the type of visit required.

5. Are Zoom for Healthcare licenses covered for communities and/or regional staff?

Yes. Licenses are covered until April 1, 2021. Renewal will be re-assessed at that time. Clients do not need licenses to access the program.

6. What are the technical requirements?

The video conferencing platform requires an internet connection – broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE). The minimum bandwidth is 600kbps (up/down) and recommended is 1.5 Mbps (up/down). Check your Internet bandwidth using Speedtest (<https://speed.measurementlab.net>).

Visit fnha.ca/virtualdoctor for more information on technical requirements for clients.

7. What technical support is available for health professionals?

The FNHA is deploying Zoom licenses to health professionals and First Nations community health centre personnel, and providing technical support where necessary. Technology support of the Zoom software will follow the current FNHA eHealth support process.

FNHA technical support is available at 1.844.364.7878. Calls will go to voice mail after hours. Zoom quick-start guides are available through the eHealth support desk at ehhealthsupport@fnha.ca.

Frequently Asked Questions

8. Is the expectation that the visits will happen in a health centre, or can they happen at the client's home?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, clients will most likely attend appointments from home. Otherwise, clients may attend appointments from community health centres or band offices where computer access is provided.

The FNHA encourages clients attending appointments from home to use earbuds or headsets, and find a private space where household members cannot overhear them.

9. If a client uses this service at a health centre or office, can a private space be arranged?

Yes, each health centre will need to provide private space for clients to maintain confidentiality.

10. What are ROSe and RUDi?

ROSe (Rural Outreach Support) is attended by a Critical Care Specialist 24/7 to support care in communities for critically ill clients.

RUDi (Rural Urgent Doctor in need) is a 24/7 virtual support pathway attended by doctors with emergency medicine and rural experience. Most will be from rural communities. Some will be from larger centers such as Nanaimo, Kelowna and Vancouver. This is a doctor-to-doctor pathway for the most part. However, any health care worker in need could access the RUDi doctor. This would include first responders, nurses and nurse practitioners. There are two shifts: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.

**For technical support,
call 1.844.364.7878 or email
ehealthsupport@fnha.ca**