



First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service

Referral Guide for Health and Wellness Providers

The First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service provides responsive, quality access to addictions medicine and psychiatry for First Nations people and their family members living in BC (even if those family members are non-status). The service is an additional tool to help build community health team capacity and enhance wholistic, wraparound care closer to home for substance use and mental health challenges.

1. What is the purpose of the First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service?

1. To provide direct virtual access to addictions and psychiatric care for First Nations people and their families
2. To provide addictions medicine and psychiatry services where every client encounter is aligned with the principles and practices of cultural safety and humility
3. To provide addictions medicine and psychiatry services where collaborative care planning and wraparound care services are integral to all client encounters

2. Who is eligible for the service?

This is a referral-based service and is available at no cost to all First Nations people and their family members living in BC. Clients cannot self-refer to this service and are encouraged to ask a provider in their circle of care for a referral.

Health and wellness providers can also call the service for provider-to-provider consultation to support the needs of complex clients.

**Health and wellness providers
call 1-833-456-7655 for assistance**

3. Who can refer clients to the service?

Health and wellness providers who can refer clients to the service include, but are not limited to:

- General practitioners
- Nurse practitioners
- Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Registered Psychiatric Nurses
- Addictions Workers
- Wellness workers
- Traditional medicine specialists
- Mental health counsellors
- Community health reps
- Treatment centre staff

Clients who are living away from home and do not have access to a community health and wellness provider can ask for a referral from the **First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day** service.

If your role is not listed above and you would like to know if you are eligible to be a referring provider, call 1-833-456-7655

Please note that this service is not intended for supporting response to acute health emergencies. In case of emergency, health and wellness providers should call 911 or access existing emergency service pathways.

Frequently Asked Questions

4. How does it work?

Health and wellness providers call 1-833-456-7655, preferably with the client present. A Medical Office Assistant (MOA) begins the intake process.

If the referring provider is not a general practitioner or nurse practitioner, the MOA will be joined by a Care Coordinator with the First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service to work through the intake process. The Care Coordinator is a unique and key role to help support intake, assessment, collaborative care planning, education, navigation, and connection to the service in a manner that is culturally safe and trauma informed.

The service is delivered through Zoom for Healthcare at a scheduled time that works for the provider and client. Attending an appointment on Zoom is simple. Clients and providers click the link in the invitation emailed to them by the MOA to launch the appointment.

5. What are the technical requirements for video conferencing?

Providers and clients will need access to a personal computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Although most computer devices can launch Zoom, it works best with:

- an internet connection: broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE)
- a minimum bandwidth of 600kbps (1.5 Mbps. is recommended). Check internet bandwidth using **Speedtest**
- a device that includes a microphone and a headset/headphone. Plugging in a headset prevents an echo in the Zoom meeting

6. What are the service hours?

- Substance Use / Addictions Medicine: Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Psychiatry: Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

7. When can I access this service?

The service will be open for referral from community providers starting at **10am on Monday August 24th, 2020.**

8. Why do clients need to attend appointments with their provider?

With the client's consent, the service encourages the referring provider or another community health support person to attend the specialist appointment with the client. This ensures that local knowledge is available to the specialist for care planning and that there is community-based continuity of care for the client.

Clients can work with their care providers to choose a location that works best for them. This may include a private room in a health centre or the client's home. Clients and providers can attend sessions together on Zoom without having to be in the same room.

Things to consider when choosing a location include client comfort and privacy, quality of internet connection, phone service, travel distances and provider schedules.

9. What if a client does not have a computer or internet access?

For reasons related to client safety, all initial consults for this service must be by video. Following the first appointment, specialists prefer to continue with visual appointments; however, phone appointments may be able to be arranged for clients who cannot visit a health centre or do not have easy access to video conferencing, and have consented to have a support person attend for the duration of the call.

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