

Virtual Care Solutions

Western and Central Zones

Regional Virtual Care Clinic – Western Zone

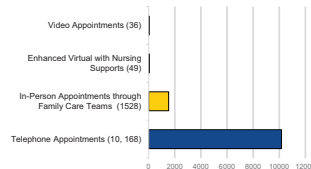
Initiative

The Regional Virtual Care Clinic (RVCC) provides non-urgent, virtual or on-site primary care appointments, for any patient within Western Newfoundland that currently does not have a primary care provider. Appointments are made with a provider (physician or nurse practitioner) based on a specific health-care need. The Western Zone is currently the only region with a designated Regional Virtual Care Clinic within the province.

To receive virtual primary care through the Regional Virtual Care Clinic, a patient must:

- be a resident of Western Newfoundland
- be in the province at the time of the virtual appointment
- have a local number that they can be reached at via telephone
- have a valid MCP number or are waiting for a new MCP card (with some exceptions)

Appointments Completed through RVCC from 2023-2024



Outcomes

- Decreased costs to the patient
- Faster access to health care services, for all residents of the Western Zone
- Decreased wait times
- Equal accessibility for patients
- Flexibility of health care service delivery
- Navigation of services by staff to existing community supports
- Case management for patients with complex needs
- Diversion of non-urgent/non-emergent care from overcrowded emergency departments
- Most appropriate resources for identified health care needs

With the development of a new integrated virtual primary care model, the Western Zone has facilitated a total of **49,284** virtual appointments in one year. Over **26,000** of these virtual appointments and **1,500** in-person appointments supported patients who do not have a primary health-care provider. This also allowed for cross coverage of rural clinics during provider gaps.



Hub and Spoke Model

In an effort to meet the primary care needs in the Western Zone, NL Health Services uses a hub and spoke model for shared care, where optimal patient care can be distributed through collaboration with Family Care Teams and the Regional Virtual Care Clinic. This ensures that all patients, whether attached to a primary care provider or unattached and awaiting a provider, will receive the most appropriate care through the most appropriate means.

A provincial electronic-based medical record, allows all members of the care team to access the full patient record and communicate and collaborate, which results in better patient outcomes.

“ I just wanted to say thank you...it is comforting to know that I have someone to reach out to between now and when I get connected to a family doctor. ”

- Patient

Virtual Emergency Room and Virtual Fast Track – Central Zone

Initiative

- Decreased physician availability in many rural facilities since 2021.
- Redesigned emergency care delivery to prevent emergency room (ER) closures.
- Established the first virtual ER in August 2021.
- Hired advanced care paramedics and respiratory therapists as airway management specialists for rural virtual ER.
- Virtual ER has taken place in all nine rural sites.
- Virtual fast track started at three rural sites in July 2023.
- Dramatic decrease in rural ER temporary closures since January 2024.

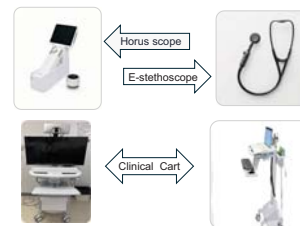
How Does Virtual ER Work?

- Virtual ER is provided by virtual physicians or virtual nurse practitioners and the on-site health care team.
- It operates in many ways the same as a traditional emergency room.
- Patients are connected to the virtual emergency physician or nurse practitioner through a safe and secure video connection.
- The team assesses the patient using virtual technology.

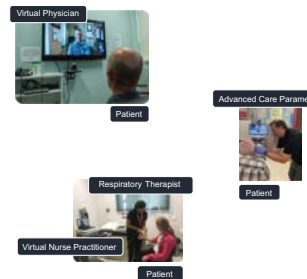
To improve patient flow and wait times, two streams of virtual care in three rural sites were created:

- Virtual physician stream to see patients with higher care needs.
- Virtual nurse practitioner stream to see patients with less urgent care needs. This stream is known as virtual fast track.

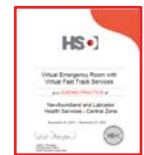
Virtual Equipment



Virtual Team



NL Health Services' Central Zone shared its work with two streams of virtual care with Accreditation Canada and received Leading practice.



“ Triage nurse was great. Paramedic who assisted virtual doctor was wonderful. ”

- Patient

Successes

