



Practice Standard

Telepractice

Telemedicine: is the provision of naturopathic medicine for the purpose of diagnosis and patient care by means of telecommunications and information technology where the patient and the provider are separated by distance. The requirements for treating patients via telepractice vary by jurisdiction

Requirements for Safe and Ethical Virtual Practice:

Registration with the Manitoba Naturopathic Association is Required:

A naturopathic doctor treating a patient who is physically located in Manitoba either in person or using telepractice **MUST** be registered with the Manitoba Naturopathic Association.

Naturopathic Scope Varies Across Canada:

Naturopathic doctors must be aware of, and comply with, the licensing requirements in Manitoba and practice within the scope of practice within Manitoba. Scope of practice varies by province.

Standard of Care:

The role of the Manitoba Naturopathic Association is to regulate naturopathic doctors not technology. Members who choose to participate in telepractice must continue to meet the same legal, ethical, and professional obligations as required in an in-person clinical setting. If a member fails to meet the standard of care in treating a patient using virtual practice it is no defense to say that they saw the patient only by way of audio-visual technology.

Clinical Judgement:

- The use of telepractice is to be determined based on the best interest of the patient. Naturopathic Doctors must use their professional judgement to determine whether telepractice is appropriate and will enable them to meet their ethical, professional and privacy obligations and standards of practice.
- Maintain and be aware of: diagnostic, assessment and treatment limitations when providing virtual naturopathic medicine.
- Consider patient's existing health status, health care needs and circumstances and only use telepractice if the risks do not outweigh potential benefits
- Refer patients to other healthcare practitioners and provide follow-up care as appropriate.
- Refer patients for in-person appointments whenever necessary.
- Provide an appropriate naturopathic assessment based on the current symptoms, past history, medications, and limited examination possible.
- Prescribe supplements with caution, particularly in the absence of a recent physical examination or laboratory results.
- Ensure that the reliability, quality, and timeliness of the patient information obtained through telepractice is sufficient.
- Utilize and engage in virtual technology training/continuing education regularly.
- Engage with colleagues to learn and share telepractice best practices.

Liability Insurance:

Telepractice may affect insurance coverage. Before practicing virtually, members must disclose such information to their insurer and confirm that they have appropriate coverage.

Informed Consent:

- Update your consent policies/forms to include telepractice and review regularly.
- Consent forms should inform patients of the limitations of telepractice, and the potential for privacy, confidentiality and information security risks associated with telepractice.
- Consider having legal counsel review consent forms and policies.

Therapeutic Boundaries:

- Maintain therapeutic relationships and professional boundaries with patients.
- Recognize that a therapeutic relationship is established using telemedicine.
- Be mindful of your telepractice environment and what patients can view and hear in your virtual practice space. Maintain a professional virtual clinical space. Maintain professionalism as you would with an in-person therapeutic relationship. For example, do not allow boundaries to be lessened or communications to become more casual; such as by texting or sharing non practice related information over technology

Privacy and Personal Health Information:

- Ensure the privacy and confidentiality of patient's personal health information by only using appropriately secured or encrypted technology as a means of transferring patient information. The use of telepractice and supporting technologies may produce records in the form of videos and voice recordings. These are part of the legal record of care and must be maintained in accordance with the MNA's Standard of Practice: Record Keeping.
- Ensure that the member's identity, location, and registration status is known to the patient and the identity of the patient is confirmed at the start of each appointment.
- Only engage in virtual practice in a private and secure location.
- Take reasonable steps to confirm that the information and communication technology and physical location used by the patient permits the sharing of the patient's personal health information in a private and secure manner.
- Be mindful of information provided in Zoom/Doxy links (such as patient's name/meeting ID's) Ensure that the correct link is sent to the appropriate patient.
- Ensure Zoom/Doxy etc., appointments are ended after each session and ensure that no patients are online before conducting a telephone appointment or appointment on another device.
- Keep track of recorded appointments in Doxy, Zoom etc., and delete them as soon as possible after patient records have been documented.
- Ensure you are familiar with virtual software and privacy/data settings.
- Have a plan in place in the event your computer system is hacked or compromised.

Record Keeping

- Maintain patient records/appointment books in accordance with regulatory standards.
- Note if appointments are conducted in person or virtually (Zoom, Doxy, phone etc.)
- Note when patients have been referred to another health care provider and/or for care that requires in-person consultation.

Related Documents

MNA Record Keeping Standard

MNA Informed Consent Standard

MNA Therapeutic Boundaries

Personal Health Information Act

This Standard was approved by the Manitoba Naturopathic Association Board of Directors January 2025