

# BCAK Standard for Virtual Care/Telehealth



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## Preamble

Kinesiologists who provide virtual care to clients in BC must recognize their responsibility to ensure client safety, quality of care and privacy are maintained. This includes ensuring service delivery is compliant with applicable BC law and the Professional Practice Standards of the BCAK, similar to how you would when providing in-person care.

For the purposes of this practice standard, virtual care is defined as any interaction between clients and kinesiologists, occurring remotely, using any mode of communication or information technologies, with the aim of facilitating or maximizing the quality and effectiveness of client care.

## BCAK Position

The use of virtual care can address issues related to access and increase both effectiveness and efficiency in delivering health care services when used appropriately. Virtual care can be highly beneficial to clients (e.g. for those living in remote communities or who have mobility issues). Alternatively, it can also exacerbate disparities and inequalities for those who lack access to the required technology, have limited digital literacy, and/or face other challenges with participating in virtual communication. BCAK kinesiologists are reminded that they must utilize an equity-oriented approach and seek to understand and address any barriers their clients may face in participating in virtual care.

BCAK members must maintain the minimum standards indicated in the BCAK's Professional Practice Standards regardless of whether service is being delivered in-person or virtually. The mode of service delivery must meet the requirements of applicable laws, including the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA-BC)*, *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act – HCCCFAA*, and other applicable Acts. The BCAK's Professional Practice Standards and Code of Ethics (Conduct) apply regardless of the mode of service delivery.

## Service Delivery Expectations

1. Virtual care does not expose the client to greater risk than other possible service delivery modes or methods. Kinesiologists will conduct a risk assessment to determine the risk of a privacy breach, expected client outcomes and client safety based on the physical environment, ability to communicate effectively, and access to assistance and emergency response personnel if required.
2. Both the kinesiologist and client are competent, understand the limitations, and the use, of the technology platform on which service will be delivered. This includes the platform's capabilities, including strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and the ability to obtain timely technical assistance.
3. The client will confirm suitable access to the technology, is aware of any limitations that virtual service delivery presents compared to in-person service, including the inability to perform hands-on examination, assessment, treatment, and other relevant factors.
4. The kinesiologist has informed the client of the process to follow if they have a concern or complaint about their kinesiology treatment/care. If the matter cannot be addressed directly, the client needs to know they have the option to raise their concerns with the BCAK and/or file a complaint with the appropriate government agency overseeing applicable laws, such as contacting the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of BC regarding privacy matters.



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## Appropriate Use of Virtual Care

Kinesiologists must only use virtual care services after conducting an appropriate risk assessment of the client, including their current health status and the treatment requirements. A properly conducted risk assessment will determine whether virtual care is suitable based on the treatment required and the level of oversight that is necessary to ensure client safety, competent service delivery, and client outcome measures can be met.

## Provision of Virtual Care Suitability and Client Risk Assessment

A kinesiologist must assess each client for suitability on a case-by-case basis to determine whether virtual care is a suitable method of service delivery, ensuring:

- they have sufficient training and competency to manage clients through virtual care,
- they have been adequately informed of the client's current mental and physical health condition(s), severity, and risk exposure,
- the client can communicate by appropriate means (speaking, reading, and writing) including comprehension and interpretation of information,
- the client is aware of their name, location, and the reason for which virtual care is being provided,
- the identities of all other participants involved in the virtual care encounter are disclosed to, and approved by, the client and documented in the client record,
- they have identified themselves by their full name, their title (credential), and their location, and if this is the first session with the client, they further identify the reason for the session and any diagnosis the kinesiologist has been provided with respect to treatment,
- they have confirmed the client preference for availability, willingness, trust of, and user competence related to the communication technology and equipment to be utilized,
- the client has the ability and willingness to take direction (instruction) without hands-on cuing or assistance,
- they create, maintain, and provide a copy of the medical record in accordance with professional and legal requirements for documentation and records management standards,
- they communicate with the referring and other treating healthcare practitioners as appropriate, including informing the client of appropriate actions to follow-up should they have questions or concerns with the process,
- the client is offered a copy of the organization's **Corporate Privacy Policy** prior to intake,
- other potential risks and benefits to the client have been assessed, compared/contrasted with traditional in-person service delivery and the client has been informed of the potential differences or outcomes that can be expected.

## Cross-Border Virtual Care

The requirements for virtual care vary by jurisdiction. Kinesiologists must be aware of, and comply with, the licensing requirements in the jurisdiction where the client is located. Some jurisdictions require kinesiologists to hold a licence to treat a client located in that jurisdiction. Kinesiologists providing care in other jurisdictions have a duty to investigate the requirements for the jurisdiction a client is located in prior to providing service. Kinesiologists providing care in other jurisdictions have a duty to decline to provide service if they do not meet the licensing or service delivery requirements for the jurisdiction the client is located in. It is also necessary for a kinesiologist providing services in another jurisdiction to review their liability insurance coverage to ensure it covers (does not exclude or restrict) the provision of services to a client located in the other jurisdiction.



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## Other

Kinesiologists must;

- have an established safety protocol in place to contact EMS in the event of a client emergency or adverse event (for example, client medical emergency, such as a heart attack or fall).
- have an established alternative method to contact the client should the virtual service platform fail or not be accessible, and the client needs to be provided with a similar alternative means of contacting the kinesiologist. For example, in the case of internet failure, the kinesiologist needs to have a way to telephone the client.
- maintain appropriate internet technology support for troubleshooting during sessions in the event of operational difficulty or errors. It is also recommended all technologies be tested and trialed prior to actual client use/session appointments to ensure proper functioning of the system features.
- follow in-person standards when using treatment assistant(s). Kinesiologists who have student interns, practicum students or assistants as part of their professional practice, must follow the same standards as those required when providing in-person services. The kinesiologist is accountable for the care they provide.
- ensure informed consent is obtained from the client for the student/intern to provide services overseen by the kinesiologist and is documented
- in addition to providing adequate supervision of the student/intern during service delivery and reviewing the student's/intern's service provision upon completion of each session, ensure proper documentation of consent and care by the kinesiologist.