

Information for clinicians

NSW Health employees can use room based video conferencing equipment or web based software to support the delivery of virtual care services. The use of a web based platform provides greater flexibility on the location of participants, removing the need to travel to provide or access health care. This supports clinicians to connect to patients, their carers and other providers that may be located at home, work or other suitable locations such as GP Practices.

The approved web based platforms in NSW Health include:

- My Virtual Care
- PEXIP
- Skype for Business.

Due to privacy risks the use of *FaceTime*, *Facebook/messenger* or *WhatsApp* video calling is not permitted using these platforms. While the features and accessibility of web-based platforms have similar functionality; My Virtual Care is the preferred option for virtual care delivery due to its security, NSW eHealth support and features to enhance the patient and clinician experience.

Hardware and Equipment

If your computer or laptop does not have an inbuilt webcam, there are options for USB cameras and other hardware devices available to order with the 'Stores' section on iProcurement.

Search for the *ICT Standard Hardware Catalogue* on **myHub** for options and prices.

Virtual care for outpatients and community services

MLHD offers patients, where clinically appropriate, the opportunity to receive some of their healthcare at or close to home via virtual care.

We use a videoconferencing solution to connect with patients external to our network, which provides a secure and encrypted connection. Patients at home can access virtual care on their home computer, iPad or smartphone.

Alternatively, patients can attend another health facility utilising a designated space at any of our sites. A patient can also attend an appointment at their GP practice, along with the GP, a practice nurse, or just utilising their equipment.

Some of the outpatient and community virtual services currently being provided by MLHD include:

- Adult and paediatric outpatient services including Rehabilitation, Geriatrics, Allied Health and Cancer Services.
- Child and adolescent, adult, and older adult mental health services including clinical consultations, case reviews, clinical supervision and prescriber clinics.

Clinicians should consider virtual care for those who will benefit the most, when:

- A patient has considerable travel to attend an appointment
- A three way consultation between specialist, general practitioner, and patient will improve care.
- A patient does not need a physical examination.
- A patient is limited by carer responsibilities, time poor, or has limited means of transport.
- A patient lives at a Residential Aged Care Facility.

Virtual care for inpatients

MLHD is part of the Critical Care Overbed Network, and has 48 cameras in Emergency and other acute wards across the LHD. The cameras provide a 24/7 live feed for the Critical Care Advisory Service (CCAS) and other specialists, to view the patient and provide in-reach support to local clinicians in the delivery of care. The camera network is securely managed by NSW eHealth, with access approved by the MLHD Chief Information Officer.

Other services can provide in-reach and specialist care to inpatients in MLHD using the My Virtual Care, PEXIP and Skype for Business platforms. All MLHD facilities are able to provide access for their patients to these platforms using the Workstations on Wheels, which have camera and audio facility, and that can be wheeled to the bedside, so the off-site clinician can link in to the patient directly.

Consent and Privacy

Patient consent for clinical care provided by virtual care is not required as consent is implied through participation. However, where research, training or recording of the service will occur, written consent from the patient must be sought and kept within the medical record.

Virtual care must be provided on NSW Health devices using only NSW Health platforms as stated previously in this document.

Virtual Care Etiquette and tips

Having the appropriate set up ensures you will have a successful virtual care appointment:

- set up a professional space away from noise and distraction if possible
- use approved platforms and hardware
- be punctual
- dress appropriately
- communicate when you have to look away from the screen
- keep lag time in mind

For more details, see the Agency for Clinical Innovation fact sheet, [Telehealth etiquette for clinicians](#).

Trouble shooting and Support

Support for clinical services is prioritised, it is important to be confident in the use of technology for clinical services to ensure that patients, their carers and other providers have a great experience.

Video Conferencing Network Support: 1300 679 727 (support number for **staff only**)

Skype for Business: 1300 28 55 33

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure this technology will work for you, there may be instances where a failure occurs. If a fault occurs, clinical care must still be provided. In developing your model of care, it is essential that you have a backup method to contact the patient, whether through a phone call or a face to face appointment. You should always discuss with your patient what will happen in this event. Where possible (time permitting) contact the relevant support team at the point of care to resolve.

If possible prior to a patient's virtual consultation, a test call should be conducted between the service and the patient. The test call will allow you to check the patient's audio and video connection prior to the consultation.

Further Resources

The NSW Health Agency for Clinical Innovation has further resources to assist your service to provide Virtual Care at: <https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/make-it-happen/telehealth/telehealth-for-nsw-health-clinicians>