

The NS College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists (NSCASLP) expects all members delivering services through telepractice to comply with all applicable regulatory and legislative requirements. When providing telepractice across borders, the audiologist or speech-language pathologist must comply with the requirements of both the client's jurisdiction and the clinician's jurisdiction.

Note that in addition to telepractice, taking directives from the Chief Medical Officer of Health as of March 23, 2020, Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists can provide a person emergency or urgent care services (*situations that could be considered urgent could be a feeding and swallowing assessment for a neonate who is at risk of dehydration and malnutrition or assessing hearing for a patient who must undergo immediate ENT surgery*) or where any postponement of care will negatively affect outcomes in the short and in the long term. The well-being of clients and staff must continue to guide the clinical decisions made by clinicians. In the rare context where a clinician considers seeing a client face-to-face, they should confirm that the client is not in quarantine or self-isolation before contact. All advice following personal protection from the Chief Medical Officer of Health should be followed.

We expect that clinicians:

- Ensure that telepractice does not expose the client to greater risk than other possible service delivery methods. This can include risks to the privacy of the client's health information or client safety depending on the physical environment and context in which services are provided.
- Comply with the expectations defined in the SAC Code of Ethics.
- Ensure that interventions, referrals, or consultations delivered using telepractice technologies are held to the same standards and expectations as those delivered in person.
- Use their professional judgment to determine if telepractice is appropriate, taking into consideration:
 - Whether telepractice is the most appropriate available method to deliver services.
 - The ability to deliver substantively similar care as services delivered face-to-face.
 - If client factors such as physical, sensory, or cognitive deficits may impact the ability to deliver appropriate care via telepractice.
- Inform the client of the process to follow if they have a concern or complaint about their care.
- Obtain informed consent as appropriate.

Consultation Procedures for the purposes of providing service during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Determine Eligibility

By telephone, the professional can ask specific questions about the client's condition.

This telephone interview will allow the professional to:

- Determine if the client is at risk or should be isolated
- Briefly document the client's condition
- Determine whether consultation should be done face-to-face or remotely

If, in your professional assessment and judgment, face-to-face care needs to be provided then follow all required precautions including spacing out appointments to minimize density of people and appropriate infection control procedures.

Prepare for the telepractice consultation

Before the consultation, NSCASLP recommends contacting the client and offering them relevant information, such as:

- The tool used for the session: telephone, videoconference, or tele-practice platform
- The need for someone to be present for safety or assistance if appropriate
- The duration of the meeting
- Privacy protection, consent, and anticipated resources needed
- The cost of the visit and proposed payment options

Following the consultation

The professional must take care to document the interactions as they would if it was a face to face visit.

The fees for the services rendered can be collected at the end of the consultation.

Insurance

The decision to reimburse speech, language and hearing services offered through telepractice lies with the private insurer, and the insurance contract with the policy holder. Suggest your client contact their insurer to verify that the latter accepts claims for telepractice and to take note of its requirements in this regard.

You should also check with your own insurance provider to determine if telepractice is covered by your policy. It is recommended you have cyber security and privacy liability coverage. You should be aware that NSCASLP does not provide liability coverage to its members. Members are responsible for verifying their own coverage through their individual insurance provider.

*Telepractice refers to services that use any form of technology (including but not restricted to video conferencing, internet and telephone) as an alternative to face-to-face interventions.