

ESTIMATES NOTE

Issue: Medeo, Provider of Mobile, Internet Based, Virtual Healthcare

Advice and Recommended Response:

- Medeo is one of several private companies in British Columbia (BC) offering services that connect physicians and patients via telehealth videoconferencing over the internet.
- There may well be a role for private telehealth videoconferencing services in BC, however, this government believes in a planned approach that includes due diligence to determine what that role might be and to develop sound policy to guide its development.
- Our Government has begun a review of Telehealth fee codes to ensure telehealth continues to grow in a manner that is optimal for patients and taxpayers in BC.
- BC is among Canada's leaders in telehealth. We are excited by the opportunities that telehealth presents and have supported the development and use of telehealth throughout BC for a decade.
- Our Government uses telehealth to support access to long-term, comprehensive and coordinated care in a secure and trusted manner in over 115 communities in BC.
- Our Government is committed to protecting patient privacy and the security of confidential medical information while ensuring vendors have opportunities to contribute to our world class health care system.

Background/Status:

- A change to the Medical Services Commission Payment Schedule Telehealth preamble in 2011 removed the condition that Telehealth services be performed at approved health authority sites thereby creating an opportunity for Medeo to offer online services

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- Telehealth services in BC started from a principle of enabling long-term care from a distance with services provided in health authority facilities. Developing services in this manner allowed for controlled growth, provision of support by clinical teams, and the capacity to fulfill privacy and security requirements by operating within the health authority facilities.
- When patients are referred for Telehealth services through a health authority, they are assessed for mental health, language and literacy issues.
- In 2009/10 over 36,000 Telehealth sessions occurred over BC's network of approximately 790 videoconferencing end points, located at 245 telehealth facilities³ in more than 115 communities. Over 70 services are available via Telehealth.

Budget/Expenditures:

Medeo has been promoting the service for all BC residents on social media, such as with promoted tweets on Twitter and ads on Facebook. They have also partnered with London Drugs.

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Approved by:

Paul Shrimpton, ED, Health IT Strategy Branch, HSIMT, February 17, 2014
X-Reference to Fact Sheet if applicable: Private Telehealth Vendors Fact Sheet

² A GP for Me program, sometimes known as the Attachment initiative, recognizes the importance of continuous doctor-patient relationships and is aimed at improving primary care in BC <http://www.gpsc.bc.ca/attachment-initiative>

³ BC Health Authorities self reported to Provincial Telehealth Office: 2013 BC Telehealth Videonconference Inventory

ESTIMATES NOTE

Issue: Private Telehealth Vendors: Medeo and LiveCare

Advice and Recommended Response:

- British Columbia is among Canada's leaders in telehealth. We are excited by the opportunities that telehealth presents and have supported the development and use of telehealth throughout BC for a decade.
- Our Government uses telehealth to support access to long-term, comprehensive and coordinated care in a secure and trusted manner in over 115 communities in BC.
- Telehealth services, especially consultations with specialists through videoconferencing, have been helping to improve care to rural and remote locations for a decade.
- British Columbia has seen a rapid increase in the development of private companies offering services that connect physicians and patients via videoconferencing over the internet.
- There may well be a role for private telehealth videoconferencing services in BC. However, this government believes in a planned approach that includes due diligence to determine what that role might be and to develop sound policy to guide its development.
- Our government will defer decisions regarding the use of vendor telehealth videoconferencing systems until we complete the following due diligence work:
 - A review of Telehealth fee codes to ensure telehealth continues to grow in a manner that is optimal for patients and taxpayers in BC.
 - Stakeholder engagement work to review telehealth policy.
 - We are committed to protecting patient privacy and the security of confidential medical information while ensuring vendors have opportunity to contribute to our world class health care system.

Background/Status:

- Physicians are using private, web based, vendor platforms such as Medeo and LiveCare or Skype to conduct telehealth over the internet.
- A change to the Medical Services Commission Payment Schedule telehealth preamble in 2011 removed the condition that telehealth services be performed at approved health authority sites thereby creating an opportunity for Medeo and other

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- Telehealth services in BC started from a principle of enabling long-term care from a distance with services provided in health authorities facilities. Developing services in this manner allowed for controlled growth, provision of support by clinical teams, and ensured privacy and security by operating within the health authority facilities.
- When patients are referred for Telehealth services through a health authority, they are assessed for mental health, language and literacy issues.
- In 2009/10 over 36,000 Telehealth sessions occurred over BC's network of approximately 790 videoconferencing end points, located at 245 telehealth facilities³ in more than 115 communities. Over 70 services are available via Telehealth.

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Approved by:

Paul Shrimpton, HSIM/IT Health IT Strategy; February 21, 2014

X-Reference to Fact Sheet if applicable: Medeo, Provider of Mobile, Internet Based, Virtual Health Care.

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² A GP for Me program, sometimes known as the Attachment initiative, recognizes the importance of continuous doctor-patient relationships and is aimed at improving primary care in BC <http://www.gpsc.bc.ca/attachment-initiative>

³ BC Health Authorities self reported to Provincial Telehealth Office: 2013 BC Telehealth Videonconference Inventory

FACT SHEET

PRIVATE VENDOR TELEHEALTH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

ISSUE

Physicians are using private, web based, vendor platforms such as Medeo and LiveCare or Skype to conduct telehealth over the internet.

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Medeo and LiveCare are the first to commence operations and have requested:

- Support and endorsement from Ministry of Health (the Ministry) departments, the BCMA clinical committees, Divisions of Family Practice and health authorities,
- Invitation across the Health Sector to participate in pilot projects,
- Changes to mission critical network settings (the Private Physician Network), and
- Vendor hardware be connected to health authority networks.

In response to the ad hoc nature of these activities, the Ministry has initiated two pieces of work:

- 1) Strategic Planning and Relations and the Provincial Telehealth Office are working with Ministry partners to determine a strategic approach to the expansion telehealth, and
- 2) The Ministry's Workforce Analysis Branch is conducting a Telehealth Fee for Service compensation review focusing on the intent of recently implemented general practitioner fee codes and compensation levels, and increased utilization of telehealth services when delivered through third party platforms.

In addition to the work already underway, the Ministry has:

- responded to a Freedom of Information request specifically related to private telehealth vendors, and
- briefed Senior Executive and provided advice to the Minister of Health.

The capacity for two-way, live videoconferencing for clinical, administrative and health related educational encounters exists in more than 115 communities throughout BC. In 2009/10 over 36,000 telehealth sessions occurred over BC's network of approximately 790 videoconferencing end points, located at 245 telehealth facilities⁴. Currently over 70 services are available via telehealth.

Telehealth services in BC started from a principle of enabling long-term care from a distance with services provided in health authority facilities. Developing services in this manner allowed for controlled growth, provision of support by multidisciplinary teams, and the capacity to fulfill privacy and security requirements by operating within the health authority facilities. When patients are referred for telehealth services through a health authority, they are assessed for mental health, language and literacy issues.

Ministry direction is to strengthen community-based services to reduce episodic, acute care with planned, proactive care that is better suited to attain population health improvements for chronic illness, mental health, prevention and maternity care.

APPROVALS

Approved by: Paul Shrimpton, Executive Director, Health IT Strategy Branch: February 21, 2014

Approved by: Lindsay Kislock, Assistant Deputy Minister, HSIMT; *[date approved]*

Approved by: [name], Finance and Corporate Services Division; *[date approved]* delete if N/A

Approved by: [name], Health Sector Planning & Innovation Division; *[date approved]* delete if N/A

⁴ BC Health Authorities self reported to Provincial Telehealth Office: 2013 BC Telehealth Videonconference Inventory