

New virtual supports available for healthcare providers in rural, remote and First Nations communities

A new virtual support initiative is enabling rural healthcare providers to deliver timely patient-centred care closer to home.

Real-Time Virtual Support (RTVS) pathways provide physicians, nurse practitioners, and nurses in rural, remote, and First Nations communities with access to 24-hour, just-in-time advice to support patient care. Through Zoom, they can be connected to one of five teams providing culturally safe and compassionate support:

1. RUDi – Emergency
2. ROSe – Critical Care
3. CHARLiE – Pediatrics
4. MaBAL – Maternity and Newborn
5. UBC Dermatology Rural and Remote Service

These teams have an understanding of the rural and cultural contexts and are available to support rural healthcare providers for any issue, including:

- providing a patient consult, second opinion, or ongoing patient support;
- reviewing a patient case;
- running through patient simulation scenarios;
- navigating the healthcare system; and
- providing collaborative support in critical times.

“The pathways were developed not only to improve access to care but also to help rural healthcare providers seek support about their patients or situations in a safe, non-judgemental way,” says Dr. John Pawlovich, RTVS lead for the Rural Coordination Centre of BC, one of the organizations involved in the initiative. “Real-Time Virtual Support is a change in culture for accessing assistance and support, and we hope to see more rural healthcare providers reaching out to us.”

To learn more about the pathways and how to access them, download the RTVS Toolkit for Healthcare Providers at <http://bit.ly/RTVSToolkit>. The toolkit is aimed at helping healthcare providers in rural, remote, and First Nations communities navigate the pathways and includes access information, Zoom instructions, FAQs, bios and photos of RTVS teams, and posters.

Real-Time Virtual Support is an initiative of the Virtual Health and Wellness Collaborative for Rural and First Nations BC and is made possible through the incredible work and collaboration of the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (supported by the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues), First Nations Health Authority, Provincial Health Services Authority, Providence Health Care, BC Emergency Medicine Network, and UBC Department of Emergency Medicine. For more information about Real-Time Virtual Support, visit rccbc.ca/rtvs.