



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Report: Soaring popularity of Telehealth among British Columbians and impact on the delivery of healthcare beyond the pandemic

- *65 per cent are more likely to choose virtual-care than in-person doctors' appointments for routine care*
- *Seven in ten say the pandemic has shown them that virtual visits can be effective*
- *Six in ten will continue to use virtual visits even when the pandemic ends*
- *Majority feel that virtual health options improve health outcomes, provide better access to health care, reduce wait times and increase convenience*

February 25, 2021 VANCOUVER, BC – Virtual healthcare has quickly become the new normal among British Columbians, according to a new survey conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs. Sixty-five per cent say they are now more likely to choose virtual-care rather than in-person visits for simple or routine health advice. Seven in ten (73%) attribute this to COVID-19, indicating that the pandemic has shown them that virtual appointments can be effective. Six in ten (57%) have had a virtual appointment with a medical professional since the start of the pandemic and around the same number (58%) say they will continue to use virtual appointments even when after COVID-19 is no longer a concern.

“Connecting with healthcare professionals via video call has gone from a necessary safety measure to the new normal,” says Chris Chiew, General Manager of Pharmacy, London Drugs. “Due to COVID-19, more British Columbians experienced virtual-care visits than ever before and most have a favorable impression of the care and convenience. This will have far-reaching impacts on patient preferences and the delivery of healthcare beyond the pandemic.”

British Columbians want more access to virtual care options beyond pandemic

An overwhelming majority in the province feel that virtual health options reduce wait times and increase convenience of health care (82%) and help provide better access to health care (79%). Two-thirds feel that it will improve health outcomes for patients (66%) and a similar number believe that expanding access to virtual care in the province will improve their personal health and their family's health (65%).

With rapid adoption and preference toward virtual healthcare options in the province, London Drugs has launched a new service partnering with [Medimap](#) allowing patients to see a physician by video conference in private consultation rooms within the pharmacy.

Now available at ten London Drugs locations in British Columbia with plans for further expansion, patients using the new Telemedicine Walk-in service will be able to receive refills for non-narcotic medications as well as other prescriptions like antibiotics and birth control with one visit to the pharmacy. Patients can also book Telemedicine appointments for specialist referrals where a clinical examination is not required.

They can also receive mental health counselling, consultations regarding skin issues, allergies, eye infections, some gastrointestinal issues as well as non-anaphylactic allergic reactions.

“Pharmacists are the most accessible health care providers and our work often requires a team-based approach. Now patients can see a physician, consult with a pharmacist, get their prescription and receive follow-up care all in one place using the Telemedicine Walk-in service,” says Chiew. “This is a significant benefit not only from a convenience perspective but also from a care perspective because collaboration among doctors and pharmacists ultimately improves patient outcomes.”

British Columbians welcome increased access to virtual care, with seven in ten (68%) indicating accessing virtual doctor visits in their local pharmacy would be convenient, particularly if they can see their doctor and, if necessary, receive their prescription all in the same place. Eight in ten (79%) believe that having virtual medical appointments as an option will help the medical system provide better access to healthcare overall.

British Columbians will soon be able to have access to a doctor virtually from home via London Drugs Telemedicine Service at Home

In March, London Drugs together with Medimap, will launch London Drugs' Telemedicine Service At-Home allowing patients in BC to connect with a doctor from the comfort of home. The Telemedicine service is a safe and convenient way for patients to consult on issues that do not require seeing a doctor in person. If a prescription is required, the doctor will forward the request to the patient's London Drugs store of choice for the prescription pick-up. When utilizing the Telemedicine service at home, patients will have access to a physician, consultation with a pharmacist, prescription service, and follow-up care all in one place.

Pharmacists warn not to delay medical care or prescription renewals because of COVID-19

According to the survey, over one-quarter (27%) of British Columbians have put off or canceled medical care as a result of COVID-19. These statistics don't bode well for patient health, according to Chiew.

“Whether it's something simple or more serious, do not delay medical care or prescription renewals because of COVID-19,” he says. “Skipping appointments, letting prescriptions lapse, getting off track with medications or simply not seeking medical attention is exactly the opposite of what patients should be doing right now. Since certain medical conditions are associated with a higher risk of serious illness including coronavirus, it is even more important to be proactive about your health.”

The new Telemedicine Walk-in service at London Drugs is a safe and convenient way for patients to get consultations for issues that don't require an in person-visit. Even for those facing chronic illness, the service offers a convenient way for patients to receive prescription renewals, discuss changing medications or have a conversation about dosage or side effects with a pharmacist available to fill prescriptions and offer additional guidance.

In most cases, the Telemedicine Walk-in service at London Drugs will allow patients to be seen by a physician within 10-20 minutes.

For information on how to access our Telemedicine service please go to:

<https://www.londondrugs.com/telemedicine> or visit one of the London Drugs locations listed during store hours.

There are some medical services not available including for any serious medical issues or those requiring physical treatment or evaluation. Also, if patients are experiencing Covid19 symptoms they should call 811.

Richmond - Ironwood Plaza
#3200 –11666 Steveston Hwy.
Richmond, B.C. [\(604\) 448-5468](tel:6044485468)

Maple Ridge - Valley Fair Mall
#101 – 22709 Lougheed Hwy.
Maple Ridge, B.C. [\(604\) 463-0991](tel:6044630991)

Burnaby - Lougheed Town Centre
#101 - 9855 Austin Avenue
Burnaby, B.C. [\(604\) 444-2222](tel:6044442222)

Surrey – Guildford Town Centre
10355 152 Street
Surrey, B.C. [\(604\) 588-7881](tel:6045887881)

Vancouver – West Broadway
525 West Broadway Street
Vancouver, B.C. [\(604\) 872-5177](tel:6048725177)

Abbotsford - West Oaks Mall
#26 - 32700 South Fraser Way
Abbotsford, B.C. [\(604\) 853-6811](tel:6048536811)

Chilliwack - Cottonwood Mall
#21 - 45585 Luckakuck Way
Chilliwack, B.C. [\(604\) 858-8347](tel:6048588347)

Vancouver - Broadway and Vine
2230 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. [\(604\) 742-6000](tel:6047426000)

Vancouver – Olympic Village
1622 Salt Street
Vancouver, B.C. [\(604\) 707-2030](tel:6047072030)

Vancouver – Park Royal North
1622 Salt Street
Vancouver, B.C. [\(604\) 707-2030](tel:6047072030)

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results are based on an online study conducted by Insights West from February 3-7, 2021 among a sample of 813 British Columbian adults 18 years of age and older. The data has been weighted according to 2016 Canadian Census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error (which measures sample variability) is +/3.4%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies between totals are due to rounding.

ABOUT LONDON DRUGS

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs sells to every province and territory in Canada through its online store www.LondonDrugs.com and has 81 physical stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from personal protection equipment for pandemic safety, to digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 9000 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring Canadian company that supports Canadian brands and continues to position itself for future growth and development.

ABOUT MEDIMAP

Medimap is a Vancouver-based technology company making it easier for Canadians to access healthcare. Over 1,200 medical clinics across Canada use Medimap's platform to publish their wait times online and connect with patients virtually. Since 2016 over 4.5 million Canadians have relied on Medimap to access care in their community. Learn more at Medimap.ca.

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Image inclusion:

A patient receives consultation with a physician in a London Drugs patient consultation room.

