

Subject: OTN – Patient Room Privacy and Equipment	Date Approved: May 22, 2010
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Specific to: All Staff and Volunteers	Next Review Date: September 2020

INTRODUCTION

Reasonable steps to provide for the physical privacy of a patient undergoing a telemedicine session should be taken when conducting the telehealth consultation.

PROCEDURE

The following steps will help ensure that the privacy of patients is protected during a telemedicine session:

Room Selection

- When selecting a room for a telemedicine sessions, consider locating it in an area that is away from high traffic so that the possibility of a breach of patient confidentiality is minimized.
- If possible, select a room that is soundproof or can be soundproofed to prevent unauthorized individuals from hearing the consultation.
- Avoid selecting a room with windows or ensure that there are window coverings available to provide for privacy.
- Provide a private area inside the telemedicine room in case the patient needs to change into patient gown, or site the studio close to the washroom.
- Locate the patient examination table in such a way that the patient would not be seen if the door was opened inadvertently.
- The door to the room should be out of view of the main camera to prevent any unauthorized individuals from intruding the privacy of the patient if the door was opened inadvertently.

Prior to and during the videoconference

- Prepare and place a sign for use outside the door when a telemedicine session is under way. The sign might read ‘Videoconference in progress, please do not disturb’. This sign should be displayed prominently on the entrance to the studio and posted before the session begins.

- No patient information should be discussed outside the room where the telemedicine session will occur and no information should be discussed inside that room before the door to that room is closed.
- Both patients and consultants must be informed and give their consent for anyone else attending the session.

After the telemedicine session/When the telemedicine system is not in use

- Make sure the room is locked and access is limited to authorized individuals only (with keys or passwords)
- If the telemedicine platform is sited in a multipurpose room and privacy is required, make sure the telemedicine platform is turned off when the room is being used for purposes other than telemedicine and back on when the occupation for those purposes is over.
- “Mic-off” setting should be enabled.
- Keep the camera focused on a view that will not compromise privacy. (A camera preset can be established for this purpose.)
- Any patient documentation used (e.g. patient referral form, consent form, X-rays... etc) during the consultation should be returned to respective departments or kept in a locked filing cabinet in the room until no longer required.
- When the telemedicine platform is a shared resource (i.e. being used in a clinical setting or in an emergency department), consideration should be given to securing the remote control in a locked cabinet or in a location with limited access.ⁱ

ⁱ Copied from OTN website accessed January 26, 2009