

Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre Ensures 24/7 Care For Those Without Access To A Primary Care Physician

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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When Kim Sell, Client Services Supervisor with Carefor Health and Community Services, was visiting a client in a retirement home, she noticed the individual's wound had deteriorated and required follow-up.

Because the client doesn't have a family physician, she contacted the Pembroke Regional Hospital about visiting the Emergency Department. That's how Ms. Sell learned about the new Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (RC VTAC) for residents of Renfrew County who have a health concern but either do not have a family physician or cannot access their usual family physician.

She called the toll-free number (1-844-727-6404) and the medical receptionist set up a telephone appointment with a family physician, who was able to deal with the problem over the phone.

"My client avoided an unnecessary Emergency Department visit, two taxi rides and many hours in a waiting room," Ms. Sell said.

The RC VTAC was created at lightning speed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a joint effort between Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service, Renfrew County Hospitals and the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, with the support of Ontario Health East.

Through the RC VTAC, family physicians, nurse practitioners and community paramedics assess and manage health concerns (including COVID-19 concerns) in multiple ways depending on the individual's needs. This includes:

- Phone appointments
- Video appointments
- In-home assessments and diagnostic testing by community paramedics
- Remote monitoring and alerting and if necessary, escalation to a designated team of physicians and allied health professionals for the management of sicker patients at home
- Referral to other services including mental health support

The new service operates 24/7 and is covered by OHIP with a valid health card.

"In Renfrew County, there are many residents who do not have access to a family physician. The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified this situation," said Pierre Noel, President and CEO of Pembroke Regional Hospital. "We are so thankful that a large number of primary care physicians and medical receptionists from across Renfrew

County have come together to make this work as part of a grassroots solution that ensures 24/7 access to care in these challenging times,” Mr. Noel said.”

To learn more about the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre, please visit www.rcvtac.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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