



Family Health Team

In Summer 2017, Village FHT announced the launch of Avocare, a new service offering free:

- Online appointment requests;
- Prescription refill requests;
- Direct communication with the reception team for your non-urgent questions.

Starting February 5, 2018, we are pleased to announce the expansion of Avocare to include:

- Receiving messages from physicians and the clinic at no charge
- Fee-based services including:
 - Sending messages to your physician for non-urgent Virtual Consultations;
 - Requesting doctor's notes¹.

To register for Avocare, please visit: www.avocare.ca/village

If you have already signed up with Avocare, you can continue to use this secure communication tool for free services, and sign up for additional paid services if you choose to. For the month of February, Virtual Consultations and doctor's notes will be free of charge. Effective March 1, 2018, the WellX system will not be available.

Why is Village FHT making this change?

Village Family Health Team is constantly seeking ways to improve service to patients. Through patient surveys, we know patients like the convenience of online communication. Recently, we introduced online appointment requests through Avocare. With the success of online appointment booking, we are now consolidating patient communication through Avocare. Village FHT acknowledges the significant convenience and efficiency of online services; however, the current system of online patient communication is not sustainable for physicians from both volume and cost perspectives. Currently, Village FHT MDs receive about 500 patient initiated emails every week.

How will this affect me as a patient?

Effective March 1, 2018, the WellX system will not be available. Instead there will be one application for appointment requests and messaging with Village FHT. You will continue to be

¹ A note is considered to be a short statement from your physician, a few sentences in length. Examples are: a note for a brief absence from work/school due to illness; a note to place a hold on a gym membership due to an injury; a note to allow insurance benefits to cover massage/physio/osteopathy or other paramedical services. Longer customized letters are considered separately, and their fees are not included in subscription fees. These fees can be discussed with your physician, if relevant.



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able to request an appointment, receive broadcast messages and receive messages initiated by your physician or the team at no cost. If you wish to request a virtual consultation with your physician, there will be a fee associated with this communication. This fee will be billed to your credit card.

Why is there a fee for me to contact my physician via Avocare?

Village FHT physicians receive a very high volume of messages every week initiated by patients. Messages are often complex and require considerable amounts of time to research and respond. Furthermore, electronic communication is not an insured service by OHIP, and as a result physicians are not paid for this work. The expansion of Avocare will enable Village FHT to maintain the convenience of a virtual consult with sustainability of this and other online services. Please note that this fee is only associated with Virtual Consults and doctor's notes initiated by the patient. There is no fee to contact Village FHT to schedule an appointment using Avocare, request a prescription refill or to receive a message sent by your physician.

How do I sign up?

You can sign up by clicking the link [here](#). Village FHT encourages all patients to sign up for Avocare so that you can request appointments on line and receive communication from the clinic at no cost. There is no fee to sign up.

What is the cost for a Virtual Consult with my physician?

The cost of a single Virtual Consult is \$10. The cost of a single doctor's note is \$20, or you can subscribe to Avocare for unlimited Virtual Consults and doctor's notes, paid every 3 months at \$30. If you wish to subscribe for 12 months of unlimited Virtual Consults and doctor's notes, an annual subscription is \$75 per year. Subscriptions renew automatically every 3 months or every 12 months depending on your plan. You can cancel your subscription any time before your renewal date. The monthly and annual subscription fees provide unlimited Virtual Consults and doctor's notes with your physician. The fee will be charged to your credit card once you subscribe, or once the service is delivered if it is purchased on an individual pay-per-use basis.

Appointment booking and messaging reception will remain free.

How does the cost work? Does the cost work per family or per patient?

Patients 16 years old and over are required to have their own Avocare account. Dependents of persons under the age of 16 can be managed under the account of a parent/guardian.

I am a case worker. How does this apply to me?

As a member of the patient's healthcare team and part of the circle of care, there is no charge to



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contact your patient's physician. We encourage you to sign-up for seamless communication with your physician in addition to the other benefits of Avocare.

Is my communication kept secure?

Privacy of your health information is our highest priority. Avocare is a fully encrypted, secure service that is PHIPA compliant. All your physician communication is kept confidential. Avocare uses one of the largest online payment processing services in the world (www.stripe.com) to process payments, ensuring that your credit card information is kept secure.

How quickly will Village FHT respond to communication through Avocare?

Communication will continue to be prompt for all appointment requests. Non-urgent physician virtual consultations initiated by the patient will be responded to as quickly as possible, within 3 business days.

What if I have an emergency or an urgent issue?

In an emergency, call 911 immediately or go to your nearest emergency department. The Virtual Consultation is for non-urgent matters only. For urgent issues, continue to call the clinic for an appointment on the same or next day.

Can I access the service using my mobile device?

Yes. You can continue booking appointments using text message or online. Virtual Consultations, doctor's notes and prescription refills with your doctor will be available through Avocare's secure web-platform that can be accessed on mobile or the web.