

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health
FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health
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INTRODUCTION OF VIDEO DIRECT OBSERVATION THERAPY (VDOT)

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 057-16 re “Introduction of Video Direct Observation Therapy” be received for information.

Key Points

- Direct Observation Therapy (DOT) is the best practice whereby clients with Tuberculosis (TB) are watched while they ingest their medication.
- Clients with TB must take medications daily for nine to 24 months; DOTs become logistically challenging, tiresome for clients and expensive.
- Video DOT (vDOT) is a cost effective solution for established DOT clients that uses a secure and private online connection for clinical staff to observe clients with TB take their medication.

Direct Observation Therapy for clients with Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial illness that is spread by the airborne route, and highly infectious. Recognizing the risk posed by TB, all medications for TB are provided free of charge to everyone. In order to ensure maximal benefit from treatment and to decrease drug resistance, all active cases of TB are watched by MLHU staff as they ingest their medication. This process is termed Direct Observation Therapy (DOT).

MLHU sees an average of 9 active TB cases per year. A case of active TB may require daily DOTs for anywhere from 6-24 months with each home visit from a public health nurse taking about one hour of staff time (including travel). Moreover, after a trusting client-clinician relationship has been formed, clients often complain that being visited daily is intrusive and may impact on their sense of privacy.

Introduction of Video Direct Observation Therapy (vDOT)

Video DOT (vDOT) is a technological solution whereby client and clinician connect online via the secure Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) for a web-cam enabled appointment. This is an encrypted web portal that does not store or record any data. Clients without access to the internet or a web-cam enabled device will be provided with a data-enabled iPad Mini for the duration of their vDOT treatment.

With each interaction expected to only take approximately 10 minutes to complete, vDOTs will enable Infectious Disease Control (IDC) Team staff to connect with well-established DOT clients in a manner that is secure, private, mutually convenient and cost effective.

This report was prepared by Tristan Squire-Smith, Manager, Infectious Disease Control Team.



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