



Section 7 » Other Services

7.1. Telehealth Capabilities

Videoconferencing infrastructure supporting cancer services have been installed at all cancer centres and in communities throughout the province. The use of technology provides an opportunity to provide access for suitable patients without having to travel to sub-specialized consults and on-treatment monitoring. Telehealth is a relatively new service; as such, there has not been a videoconferencing culture amongst health professionals. However, Table 7-1 shows that providing clinical health care at a distance is increasing in frequency for medical oncology and radiation oncology to three of the health authorities. It is expected that these regional variations will persist over time due to the fact that FH and VCH provide care to largely urban and densely populated regions

Table 7-1: Frequency of Telehealth Appointments, by Specialty

From BCCA Facility	To Patient residing in HA	Medical Oncology		Radiation Oncology	
		2009	2010	2009	2010
Abbotsford Centre	Interior	4		1	
Fraser Valley Centre		8			
Southern Interior Centre		408	402		
Vancouver Centre		127	44		1
Vancouver Island Centre		8			1
Southern Interior Centre	Vancouver Island		1		
Vancouver Island Centre		529	828	60	188
Southern Interior Centre	Northern	3	6		
Vancouver Centre		2	4		12
Vancouver Island Centre					1
TOTALS		1,089	1,285	61	203

7.2. Supportive Care

“Psychosocial oncology is a specialty in cancer care concerned with understanding and treating the social, psychological, emotional, spiritual, quality-of-life and functional [practical] aspects of cancer, from prevention through bereavement. The focus is on a whole-person approach to cancer care, addressing a range of human needs that can improve the quality of life for affected individuals and their networks.” [14]



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7.2. Supportive Care (cont.)

The provincial psychosocial program focuses on the development and implementation of services for patients and their families and/or caregivers. Working collaboratively with health care providers in cancer centres, community oncology clinics and other health related settings, the psychosocial team provides services across the province through various service modalities, including the use of health technologies such as the internet and telehealth. The psychosocial oncology program is actively engaged in research and educational initiatives within the province and nationally. Within the BCCA Patient and Family Counselling Programs at the cancer centres, there were 5973 new referrals in 2010-11.

Similarly, Survivorship and Oncology Nutrition programs are equally complex and dynamic as the programs strive to meet regional needs. Within BCCA, there is provincial leadership for Survivorship and Oncology Nutrition programs, which are also focused on the development and implementation of services for patients and families. The development of provincial indicators would provide greater understanding of cancer patients' needs across the province; yet, given the rich diversity in the regional profiles observed throughout this report, provincial supportive care indicators may remain intangible.