



Ontario
Rheumatology
Association

April 20, 2020

ORA Position Statement on Funding for Virtual Care During COVID-19

The Ontario Rheumatology Association is in full support of measures to minimize risks to our patients during this pandemic, including the use of physical distancing. To that end, we have embraced the use of telephone and video communication with our patients since mid-March. This has allowed for continuity of care without having to bring patients out of their homes where they could be exposed to infection.

It is our belief that the use of these methods has maintained patient care and we are comfortable in continuing this method of working with our patients for the foreseeable future. We feel that this work is valuable, important, and beneficial. Given that this work has been continued on an ongoing basis, and will continue for the foreseeable future, it is imperative that its value is recognized by the government by paying the physicians who are delivering this work.

We support negotiations between the Ontario Medical Association and the Ministry of Health to create a reimbursement scheme of some sort that would result in payment to physicians for work being done in a timely fashion. We would support the ability to use our usual codes for phone and non-OTN video calls, or for the rapid payment of the suggested K083 codes that have been created, or whatever other solutions that the Ontario Medical Association negotiation team and the government can arrive at.

To not pay physicians, who operate as small business owners within our communities, paying taxes, paying for our staff and overhead, while we continue to work hard to serve our patients in this difficult time is unacceptable. We strongly suggest that the government work hard with the Ontario Medical Association to reach an appropriate agreement, and we will continue to vocalize our displeasure and disappointment with the current state of affairs through whatever means available until an appropriate resolution is reached.

Dr. Jane Purvis, President, Ontario Rheumatology Association

Dr. Philip Baer, Vice president, Ontario Rheumatology Association,

Dr. Carter Thorne, Rheumatology Section Chair, Ontario Medical Association