8 Tips to Protect Yourself While Delivering Virtual Care

Virtual care continues to evolve, bringing new opportunities to improve patient care and new privacy and cybersecurity risks.

OntarioMD recommends these tips to protect your patients, your practice, and your data:

1. Delete emails containing personal health information (PHI) from your inbox and deleted items folder as soon as they are no longer required. Remember that images, screenshots, voice and video recordings containing patient information are also PHI and should be managed securely.
2. Install security updates promptly for operating systems, electronic medical records (EMRs), web browsers, virtual care platforms, mobile devices, firewalls, and other software. Enable automatic updates whenever possible.
3. Encrypt sensitive information both when it is stored ("at rest") and when it is transmitted ("in transit"). This includes laptops, smartphones, tablets, USB drives, back-up media, cloud storage, and communications with patients and other clinicians.
4. Transmit PHI only through secure messaging, patient portals, or other approved communication platforms that provide appropriate encryption and privacy safeguards. Be cautious of unexpected emails, text messages, or links requesting patient information or login credentials.
5. Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever available and use strong, unique passwords for each account. Consider using a password manager to securely generate and store passwords.
6. Maintain audit logs and review them periodically to identify inappropriate or unauthorized access to patient records. Promptly investigate and report any suspicious activity in accordance with your organization's policies.
7. Work with your EMR and technology vendors to ensure data is securely backed up, restoration processes are tested regularly, and incident response plans are in place.
8. Ensure you know how to recognize and report phishing attempts, ransomware, or other cybersecurity incidents that could affect patient care.

Read more about OntarioMD's privacy and security services at
www.ontariomd.ca/products-and-services/privacy-and-training-resources.
For questions about these services, please contact **support@ontariomd.com**.

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