

For Immediate Release:

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Virtual urgent care closes gaps to accessibility

(LONDON, Ontario) – In an effort to increase health care access for families, Children’s Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) will extend its Virtual Paediatric Urgent Care Clinic beyond the pandemic in consultation with regional partners.

Launched in May 2020 as a response to COVID-19, the Paediatric Virtual Urgent Care Clinic has seen more than 5,600 patients, with one-third of patients accessing virtual care from outside the London-Middlesex region. With app. 1,300 visits booked since January 2022, a recent patient survey showed 72 per cent of patients strongly agree that virtual visits are as good as, or better than, in-person visits.

“There are gaps in the health care system, which can lead to an imbalance of who receives care,” said Jatinder Bains, Vice President, Clinical Programs at LHSC and Children’s Hospital. “A pillar of the Ontario health care system is universality, and it is our organization’s responsibility to help address gaps. Virtual urgent care enables patients who may not physically be able to come to a hospital, the ability to receive care. With 34 per cent of patients accessing care from smaller communities outside London Middlesex, we’re slowly beginning to close those gaps.”

Virtual urgent care offers patients the opportunity to connect with a care provider from the comfort of their home.

“The pandemic changed the way we deliver care and pushed us to explore virtual opportunities,” said Dr. Rod Lim, Medical Director, Paediatric Emergency Department at Children’s Hospital. “Within the challenges of COVID-19, we were committed to providing options for care and found an effective digital solution. Virtual urgent care is an example of something positive coming out of the

pandemic; we're now able to reach a larger audience virtually and potentially help those unable to physically access the hospital.”

Quick facts

- Patients or caregivers can contact the Paediatric Virtual Urgent Care Clinic at 1-844-CARE-844
- Patients or caregivers can self-schedule an appointment at their convenience [online](#)
- From the hours of 3 – 7 p.m. everyday, parents or caregivers can speak to a paediatric emergency room physician by video to discuss the child's condition and, together, determine the next steps
- 72 per cent of users of the clinic strongly/agree that the virtual visit was as good as or better than an in-person visit; 20 per cent are neutral.
- 64 per cent of patients state they would have otherwise taken their child to a local Emergency Department had the virtual urgent care service not been available
- Physicians at the clinic are able to prescribe new medications and may be able to assist with new and urgent referrals for care within a patient's community
- The clinic also provides patients with basic technical support ahead of their appointment as needed

For additional information on the clinic, visit urgentcareontario.ca.

About London Health Sciences Centre

As one of Canada's largest acute-care teaching hospitals, LHSC is dedicated to providing exceptional patient care, while championing the spirit of medical advancement through teaching practices and breakthrough research. For 146 years, LHSC has been an integral part of the London community offering compassionate medical care for its people, as well as those across the Southwestern Ontario region, and the world. National and international medical firsts have been pioneered at LHSC, including the discovery of vinblastine and the use of cobalt radiation transforming the lives of people across the globe. Through collaborative partnerships with Western University and over 30 educational institutions, more than 1,800 health care professionals actively seek out training opportunities each year at LHSC, acknowledging the opportunity to work alongside some of Canada's top medical scholars. With more than 15,000 staff, physicians, and residents, LHSC is committed to achieving its vision '*Working together to shape the future of health*'. More information about LHSC

can be found at www.lhsc.on.ca.

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