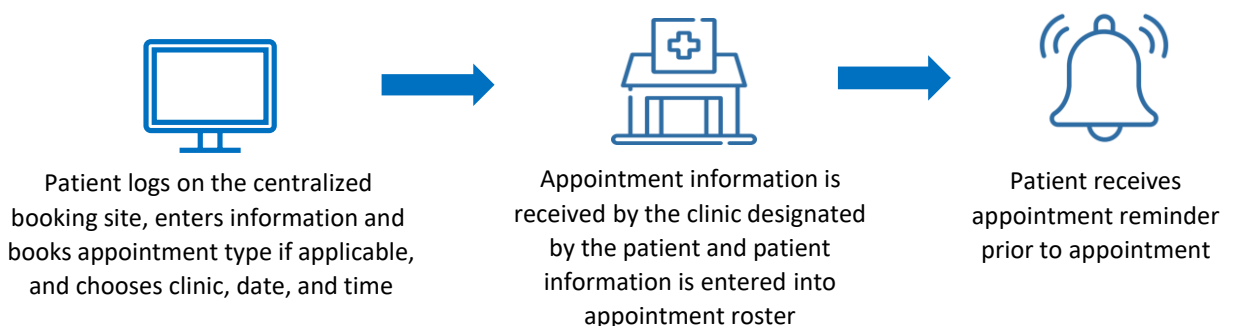


**A centralized Online Appointment Booking (OAB) solution enhanced the patient experience when accessing a COVID-19, Cold & Flu Care Clinic and became an essential part of this clinic model.**

In 2021/2022, Ontario Health (OH) funded the implementation of a centralized, integrated Online Appointment Booking (OAB) solution for COVID-19, Cold & Flu Care Clinics (CCFCCs) in the OH-Central Region. COVID-19 posed an urgency for developing a population-based interprofessional approach to clinical care, regardless of the patient's status of attachment to primary care. CCFCCs were designed to be solely dedicated to providing Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) safe environments for the treatment of illnesses related to COVID-19, cold and flu. This approach allows primary care to focus on providing non-COVID-19 related care, potentially diverting patients from presenting to the emergency department for COVID-19, cold and flu symptoms.

To empower patients to quickly and efficiently make an appointment for symptoms possibly related to COVID-19, a centralized OAB platform was selected in consultation with the CCFCC Community of practice, including clinicians, clinic managers and OH managers, and implemented with change management support from the eHealth Centre of Excellence. The OAB solution allowed patients to see clinic locations and search for available appointments across a large geographical area. **Figure 1** below highlights the process of OAB for patients.

**Figure 1: Patient Online Appointment Booking Process**

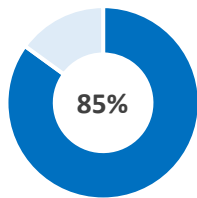


**“There is growing provincial interest in what partners have been doing here in Central Region and how impactful it has been for patients to have a simple to use single point of entry to book their COVID-19, Cold and/or Flu assessments...The digital component is impressive on its own, but the overarching commitment to patient and person-centred care over individual provider interests is most impressive.”**

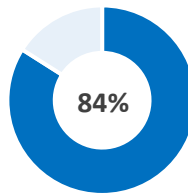
**- Dave Pearson, Director of Clinical Programs, Ontario Health**

## Results of CCFCC Patient Experience Survey

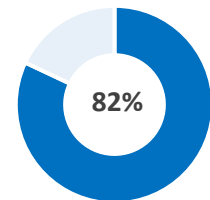
All patients who utilized the common online booking platform were asked to complete the CCFCC Patient Experience Survey. The below metrics highlight the patient experience with OAB (N=73).



Found OAB  
**easy to use**



Found the **booking  
process reasonable**



Were **satisfied** with  
the overall process

The patient experience survey results indicated a high level of overall satisfaction with the online booking experience. Patients who utilized OAB ranged in ages from 18 to 65 years and older. Overall, age was not a factor as most patients found OAB easy to use regardless of their age; no significant difference was found ( $p=.72$ ) when comparing patients under 65 ( $n=59$ ) versus patients over 65 ( $n=14$ ) regarding ease of use of OAB. Based on the results from the patient experience survey, centralized OAB added value to the overall implementation of CCFCC and thus OAB will continue to be offered for future iterations of CCFCC.

## Lessons Learned and Future of OAB for CCFCCs

- Building a seamless and standardized implementation model for OAB across multiple clinics with different EMRs, presented significant and complex challenges, highlighting the need for accommodating multiple workflows.
- Significant investments of time and resources were required for consultations with individual clinics and the Community of Practice to ensure that the implementation plan and operationalization met their needs.
- The second iteration of OAB for the CCFCCs will include enhancements to the patient booking experience but will not include EMR integration. A day sheet model will allow clinics to download a file with the patient booking information to copy and paste into their EMR.
- Enhanced features for patients will include filter options for locations, first available appointments, and language options when booking an appointment.
- Work continues towards a shared EMR and integrated OAB across all CCFCCs.



If you have any questions or would like further information on this case study, contact [communications@ehealthce.ca](mailto:communications@ehealthce.ca).

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