

Participant Letter of Information

Study Title: The Use and Needs for Digital Health Tools by Physicians and Nurse Practitioners Providing Care in Primary Health Care Settings in Ontario Health - West Region

Principal Investigator: Dr. Mohamed Alarakhia, MD, CCFP, MSc, Family Physician at the Centre for Family Medicine Family Health Team. The Managing Director of the eHealth Centre of Excellence. The Chief Clinical Information Officer for Ontario Health, West Region. Assistant Clinical Professor at McMaster University. Faculty Digital Health Lead, Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, McMaster University, Waterloo Regional Campus

Why is this study being done?

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a notable increase in the use of virtual care and other digital health tools. Despite the shift in the adoption and use of digital health tools to flatten the curve and reduce risks, there is limited data that explores the extent of current practices, challenges and needs among primary care providers related to the use of digital health tools in healthcare. A thorough understanding of the primary care clinicians' needs is necessary to inform the planning and delivery of support that meets the providers' needs.

What will my responsibilities be if I take part in the study?

This information letter provides you with detailed information about the research study. Once you understand the study, please take your time to make your decision and feel free to connect with the researchers should you have any questions. **Please be advised that submitting your answers to the survey questions will be considered your consent to participate in this study.**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a short survey. The questions will be about your use of virtual visits and digital health tools, any challenges you're experiencing and the type of support that you would like to see implemented in the future to help you integrate virtual visits and other digital health tools in your practice. It is anticipated that the time commitment on your part will be minimal and would not exceed 15 minutes of your time.

The survey will remain active for three weeks from the date you receive this invite. A reminder will be sent to after two weeks from the survey initialization to improve the response rate.

How many participants will be in the study?

We are reaching out to all primary care physicians and nurse practitioners practicing in Ontario Health - West Region. We are expecting a return of 1,174 surveys.

What are the Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts?

We do not anticipate any risks.

What are the Potential Benefits for Participating?

Findings will be used to inform the planning to support the integration of virtual visits and other digital health tools in primary care practices across the Ontario Health West Region. This will highlight a future benefit to the participant. In addition, participants may benefit indirectly by learning more about the digital health tools available to enhance patient care in primary care practices, which may provide areas of interest for deployment. Findings from the survey will be published and shared within primary health care communities in the Ontario Health West Region, providing insights on the current use of virtual visits, other digital health tools and challenges and preferences for support methods among the primary care community. This will inform providers' decisions for future deployment of digital health tools in practice.

How Will Information be Kept Private?

All information obtained in the study will be kept confidential. Only anonymous data is collected. All responses will be stored in a password-protected file on a password and virus protected laptop provided by the eHealth Centre of Excellence. Once the analysis is completed, records of the anonymous study data will be stored at the eHealth Centre of Excellence for seven years, and then they will be erased.

Can Participation in the Study End Early?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may decline any of the survey questions you do not wish to answer. You have the right to withdraw at any time during the survey completion, by simply not submitting the survey responses.

Will I be paid to participate in this study?

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

Will there be any costs?

There will be no costs to you for participating in this study.

Should you have any questions about the study (project 11389), please contact Dr. Mohamed Alarakhia, Principal Investigator, by e-mailing Mohamed.Alarakhia@eHealthCE.ca or via phone at 519-580-3070.

This study has been reviewed by the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (HIREB). The HIREB is responsible for ensuring that participants are informed of the risks associated with the research, and that participants are free to decide if participation is right for them. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please call the Office of the Chair, Hamilton