



**NBASW ETHICS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES TRAINING**  
**STANDARDS REGARDING TELEHEALTH SERVICES, THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE Q&A**

**Q: When were these Standards adopted?**

The [\*Standards Regarding Telehealth Services, the Use of Technology and Social Work Practice\*](#) were adopted by the NBASW on November 27, 2020. They serve to provide information, direction and clarity to social workers on the ethical use of technology in both their personal and professional lives. These Standards complement and expand on the principles outlined in the previously adopted [\*Standards for the Use of Technology in Social Work Practice\*](#) (2010).

**Q: Why are these Standards important?**

The [\*Standards Regarding Telehealth Services, the Use of Technology and Social Work Practice\*](#) are important as they guide social workers through the use of present-day technologies and highlight technological considerations, based on the [\*Code of Ethics\*](#) (2007). The COVID-19 pandemic shifted service delivery methods for many and increased the number of social workers offering electronic social work services. These Standards were developed to address the questions that the NBASW was receiving regularly from members who were looking to incorporate technology into their practice, particularly at the onset of the pandemic.

**Q: What should I be aware of before providing electronic social work services?**

In addition to workplace policies and procedures (if applicable) and the [\*Standards Regarding Telehealth Services, the Use of Technology and Social Work Practice\*](#), social workers should be familiar with the principles outlined in the [\*Code of Ethics\*](#) (2007) and the various standards and guidelines adopted by the NBASW, including the [\*Standards for the Use of Technology in Social Work Practice\*](#) (2010). For further guidance, please consult the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) [\*Social Media Use and Social Work Practice\*](#) (2014).

**Q: What programs does the NBASW recommend social workers use to offer electronic social work services?**

Services may be provided by telephone or other electronic means (examples include e-mail, videoconferencing, etc.). When choosing which platform to use, members should review information about the technology with respect to confidentiality and security. For video

conferencing platforms, the NBASW recommends paid programs, as paid private networks offer better computer security due to their encryption. There are also a variety of telehealth programs available online. All communication platforms must be fully researched by social workers and must meet high-security standards.

**Q: Do I have access to paid video conferencing platforms as a member of the NBASW?**

Currently, New Brunswick social workers can obtain free Zoom for Healthcare accounts through the Department of Health until March 2023 at which time the program will be reviewed. To apply for the program, complete and submit the [Connect Care Access Request for Zoom for Healthcare](#). Completed forms and requests for additional information can be sent to [connectedcare@gnb.ca](mailto:connectedcare@gnb.ca).

**Q: How can social workers know whether they are competent to offer electronic social work services?**

Before providing electronic social work services, social workers must ensure they have the skills and knowledge that are necessary to provide clients with quality services. This involves researching the technological platforms involved, ensuring that the proper security measures are taken, having the ability to reasonably answer clients' questions regarding the platform, and being able to walk clients through issues they may experience.

**Q: Do I need professional liability insurance to provide electronic social work services?**

The [Code of Ethics](#) (2007), section 5.1.1, requires that social workers working in private practice maintain adequate malpractice, defamation and liability insurance. While liability insurance is not a requirement for social workers who are not working in a private practice setting, it is something that all social workers could benefit from. As a best practice, it is recommended that social workers incorporating the use of technology into their practice have an updated professional liability insurance policy that adequately covers their provision of electronic services.

Members employed by an agency may have coverage provided through their place of work. It is recommended that member's contact their employers to verify whether they are covered through an employer plan and whether the plan provides coverage for electronic services.

NBASW members are eligible to receive discounted BMS professional liability insurance rates through the CASW Professional Liability Insurance Program. The policies offered by BMS provides a full range of coverage options that are specifically designed to meet social work practice needs, such as E-services coverage and Cyber Liability and Privacy Breach coverage.

**Q: I'm registered as a Practicing member with the NBASW and I have been asked to provide services to a student who is temporarily living in New Brunswick to attend University and who does not have a permanent address in the province. Can I provide social work services to a client who is only in New Brunswick for a limited period?**

Yes, NBASW membership allows social workers to provide social work services to clients located in New Brunswick, regardless of whether the individual is in New Brunswick on a temporary or permanent basis. If the client leaves New Brunswick, for any length of time, and wishes to continue services remotely while outside the province, the social worker will need to contact the regulatory body in the province in question to determine their registration requirements and become duly registered before providing social work services within their jurisdiction.

**Q: I'm registered as a Practicing member with the NBASW and I'm providing couples counselling. One of the individuals lives in New Brunswick and the other is working in another province for a period of 3 months. Can I continue to provide services to both individuals?**

The delivery of Health services falls within provincial jurisdictions and social workers are required to be registered in the province in which the client is located during the time of service. In these circumstances, the social worker would need to contact the regulatory body where the other client is working to determine the requirements of providing electronic services. Members are also advised to contact their professional liability insurance provider before providing services.

**Q: I'm a Registered Social Worker in another province and my client is relocated in New Brunswick. Can I provide electronic services?**

If a social worker from another Canadian province wishes to provide electronic social work services to clients who are residing in New Brunswick, they can apply as a Temporary Authorized Member (TAM) with the NBASW. More information about the application requirements for NBASW membership can be found on the [NBASW website](#). TAM allows people to offer social work services in New Brunswick for a specific purpose and limited time. If a social worker is looking to provide electronic services for a longer period of time, they can apply as a Practicing member Practicing Member. Practicing Member application details can also be found on the [NBASW website](#).