

Submitted by: Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists

The Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists (MSOT) represent Occupational Therapists working in Manitoba.

We are providing input with our perspective on restricted access to digital care for many Canadians, as requested by the Competition Bureau on your second discussion question “What other barriers are impeding Canadians access to virtual care and restricting innovation and choice in the health care sector? Can these barriers be reduced-and if so, how- in order to facilitate the entry and expansion of digital solutions.”

While not a localized problem to only Manitoba, access to virtual care in northern Manitoba communities is severely lacking. It is more vital for rural communities who do not have access to the health care resources provided in cities, to have access to digital health care.

Occupational Therapists who work in rural and northern communities in Manitoba have identified the need for digital devices in health care. It is important to create equal opportunity and access to digital services for all people living in Canada and highlighting the fact that there is a greater need in rural and northern communities. This includes adequate internet bandwidth, cell reception and the technology or devices to access internet services.

Additionally, there is significant challenges and inequity in the ability to deliver virtual health services to individuals living in poverty or without permanent housing. Improving on virtual health care is more crucial for those who are not able to access in person health care services.

Providing accessible digital care services to those living in poverty could diminish a large gap between those who have access to health care supports and those who are unable to.

Thank you for taking the time to seek out feedback and hearing the voices of MSOT members as we aim to provide equitable access to health care supports for northern communities.

Sincerely,

Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists