



## **Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre surpasses 10,000 mark for both family doctor assessments and COVID-19 tests**

**September 1, 2020** – The Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (VTAC) has hit the 10,000 mark for two major milestones. In five months, the VTAC has completed more than 10,000 family physician assessments and the VTAC community paramedics have swabbed over 10,000 residents via COVID-19 testing clinics.

“Through VTAC, we have consistently helped residents access care for urgent health concerns during the pandemic,” said Dr. Jonathan Fitzsimon, Clinical Coordinator, Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre. “As we head into the back-to-school phase of the COVID-19 crisis, VTAC will continue to support the healthcare needs of all our residents across a vast geography through our family physician assessments, in-home assessments via community paramedics and drive-thru testing clinics.”

The VTAC provides virtual family physician assessments to Renfrew County and South Algonquin residents who do not have a family physician or cannot access their family physician.

Nancy Lounsbury works with the Mobile Mental Health Crisis Team at Pembroke Regional Hospital and has seen how VTAC has benefited her clients during the pandemic.

“I had a client who was experiencing anxiety and needed a referral to the Crisis Team Rapid Access Clinic, but didn’t have a family doctor,” said Nancy. “The VTAC provided him with the right support in a non-stressful way. This service makes care more accessible for people and takes a load off the emergency departments.”

COVID-19 testing is currently available to any Renfrew County or South Algonquin resident who has pre-registered through VTAC.

“Paramedics continue to post rotating schedules every two weeks to ensure that everyone in Renfrew County and South Algonquin has access to mobile COVID-19 testing and assessment in their community,” said Mike Nolan, The County of Renfrew Paramedic Service. “In addition to the pre-scheduled drive thru testing, paramedics are also responding to the evolving needs of congregate care settings and workplaces.”

A key feature of the VTAC healthcare service is 24/7 medical receptionist team who virtually provides a centralized point of contact to determine the patient’s next step, which could include a family physician assessment by telephone or video and/or pre-registration for an upcoming drive-thru testing clinic.

“Our medical receptionist team has played an integral role providing Renfrew County and South Algonquin residents with immediate support to help each person navigate their next steps,” said Karen Simpson, Administrative Lead, Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre. “The VTAC infrastructure we have in place has positioned us to meet the changing needs as the pandemic evolves in our communities.”

For a current snapshot of the VTAC’s impact, view the dashboard at [www.rcvtac.ca](http://www.rcvtac.ca).

### **About Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre**

The Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (VTAC) was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen access to primary care for all Renfrew County and South Algonquin residents. It connects Renfrew County and South Algonquin residents who have a health concern (including COVID-19 concerns) but either do not have a family physician or cannot access their usual family physician with 24/7 care and support from a family physician, nurse practitioner and/or community paramedic via phone, video or an in-home assessment. It also provides referrals to other services including mental health support. The VTAC is a collaboration between Renfrew County Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service, Renfrew County Hospitals and the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, with the support of Ontario Health East. Learn more at [www.rcvtac.ca](http://www.rcvtac.ca)

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