

# Telestroke Update: Planning for a Pilot at Comox Valley Hospital

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## Core Team Members

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## Telestroke at Island Health

Collaboration is underway between Virtual Care Services (VCS) and Brain Health to bring a Telestroke program to Island Health. Telestroke is defined by the Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations as "*virtual emergency care provided between a referring and consulting hospital site to support emergency care for a patient with an acute stroke*". This video-calling service will be used for 24/7 rapid assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation by a stroke neurologist and consideration of treatment options in collaboration with the ED team.

Currently, ER Physicians are able to call a stroke neurologist for a telephone consult and for many cases, this will continue to be sufficient; however, Telestroke will provide a video option to support more difficult decision-making processes, such as detailed consent for thrombolysis, premorbid status, and check-ins with a patient's family. It will also increase the quality of clinical assessment by the neurologist.

## Device Selection and Comox Valley Hospital Pilot

Project planning has concluded for Phase 1 and after some contracting challenges with the initial devices selected, VCS pivoted to building a new wireless videoconferencing cart that can be used for both Telestroke and virtual care applications in other specialties. Device testing is nearing completion, and the clinical cart will be ready for use in the near future at Comox Valley Hospital (CVH), the project's first pilot site.

"Time is brain" in stroke care, and the Project Team is working to ensure that this new video component will not add significant time to the hyperacute stroke workflow. The Project Team and CVH staff have mapped the current state workflow to establish a baseline for ongoing quality improvement monitoring, and with support from Strategic Continuous Quality Improvement, this workflow has now been validated through real-time observation. In the coming weeks, the Project Team will work with CVH to create a new Telestroke workflow and reduce the overall time to treatment for stroke patients.

