CHOOSING AN IT SUPPORT
PROVIDER FOR YOUR CLINIC

This template provides guiding questions to help select a local information technology (IT) support vendor for your private practice clinic. Start by assessing your clinic’s IT needs and then review the list of questions below to consider when interviewing IT companies. Having access to an appropriate level of IT support is essential to **protecting personal health information** **(PHI).**

# Understand Your Clinic’s IT Support Needs

| question | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What types of software or applications are currently used at the clinic?
 |  |
| 1. What types of hardware are currently used at the clinic?
 |  |
| 1. Are employees issued devices or do they use their own?
 |  |
| 1. Where is your server or networking room located?
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| 1. Is there an appropriately skilled individual to act as your clinic’s Security Lead?
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| Question | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Does the clinic currently have a secure backup or disaster recovery system?
 |  |
| 1. How do you generally communicate or send data with patients and other providers? Which applications and providers do you use?

*i.e., Phone call, Email, Fax/eFax, Videoconferencing, Mail* |  |
| 1. How is old tech equipment typically disposed of?
 |  |
| 1. Do you have or require wireless network access?
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| 1. Does the clinic need support outside typical business hours?
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| 1. How quickly is a response expected for critical and non-critical issues?

*i.e., Do you have a contingency plan in place? How long could you go without IT support if you lost EMR access or had a power outage?* |  |
| 1. Will the clinic team work from home or other remote locations?
 |  |
| 1. Are there any upcoming changes planned for the clinic? Is there new equipment, clinic move, or special projects to consider?
 |  |

# IT Support Service Questions

| Question | ANSWER |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What type of support assistance can they provide? Over the phone, remote desktop, on-site?
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| 1. What is their coverage on weekdays, after-hours, weekends?
 |  |
| 1. Do they have experience working with clinics on the Private Physician’s Network (PPN)?
 |  |
| 1. Are their staff skilled in the installation and maintenance of wireless networks?
 |  |
| 1. Do they have knowledge of encryption and authentication methods to secure data and manage access?
 |  |
| 1. Will assigned support staff sign confidentiality agreements?
 |  |
| 1. Are they familiar with the tools and resources offered by the DTO such as the [Physician Office IT Security Guide](https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/resource-centre/physicians/doctors-technology-office-dto/physician-office-it-security)?
 |  |

# IT Support Contract and Cost Questions

| Question | answer |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What options are covered in the support agreement? Support may include hardware, software (including patches), network monitoring, staff training, strategic planning.
 |  |
| 1. What are the contract cancellation terms?
 |  |
| 1. Do they provide guaranteed response times in their service agreement?
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| 1. How are services billed for the different support levels they provide? Frequency, subscription type?

*i.e.,**Most IT support companies offer a choice of service levels. Ask about available service options:**Pay-as-you-go: the clinic pays an hourly rate or a fixed price.**Break-fix: charged hourly or offered on a fixed price contract like an insurance policy.**Managed Service: IT company actively manages your clinic systems (preferred).**Parts included: IT company fixes hardware problems at their cost.* |  |

**Need customized support with your clinic IT decisions? DTO is here to help.**

**Call us at 604-638-5841 or send us an email at DTOInfo@doctorsofbc.ca**

[**Visit our website**](https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/managing-your-practice/doctors-technology-office-dto) **for more information and resources**