

Show me the benefits: Clinicians informing the eConsult service for Ontario

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What is an eConsult?

- Recent studies show that **Ontarians often wait too long** and have to travel too far to benefit from a specialist's advice. When a specialist's advice is needed, the level of collaboration amongst providers varies greatly.
- **Virtual Care:** An eConsult occurs when a family physician or nurse practitioner (requesting clinician) electronically sends a question to a specialist.



eConsult Provincial Initiative – Phase 1 Pilot

The main objectives of Phase 1 Pilot are to:

- Work with select regional participants to contribute to an eConsult “proof of concept” to test various eConsult service models and generate over **12,000 eConsults**.
- Provide a baseline of eConsult data as part of a formal Benefits Evaluation which will inform decisions required for a provincial eConsult service.



A Nurse Practitioner's Experience

eConsult Clinical Workflow

- In some practices, the requesting clinician emails the delegate with the clinical question for a patient, identifying the relevant reports to include.
- The delegate then manages the process of sending and receiving the eConsult and updates the patient record with the specialist's response.

“I use OTN eConsult as a delegate on behalf of the family physicians and when they want an eConsult, they send me a secure message with the name of the patient, the question they want to ask and highlight which information from the EMR they want attached as background information. The specialists have been very responsive and it takes me under ten minutes to submit an eConsult and the system is really easy to use.”

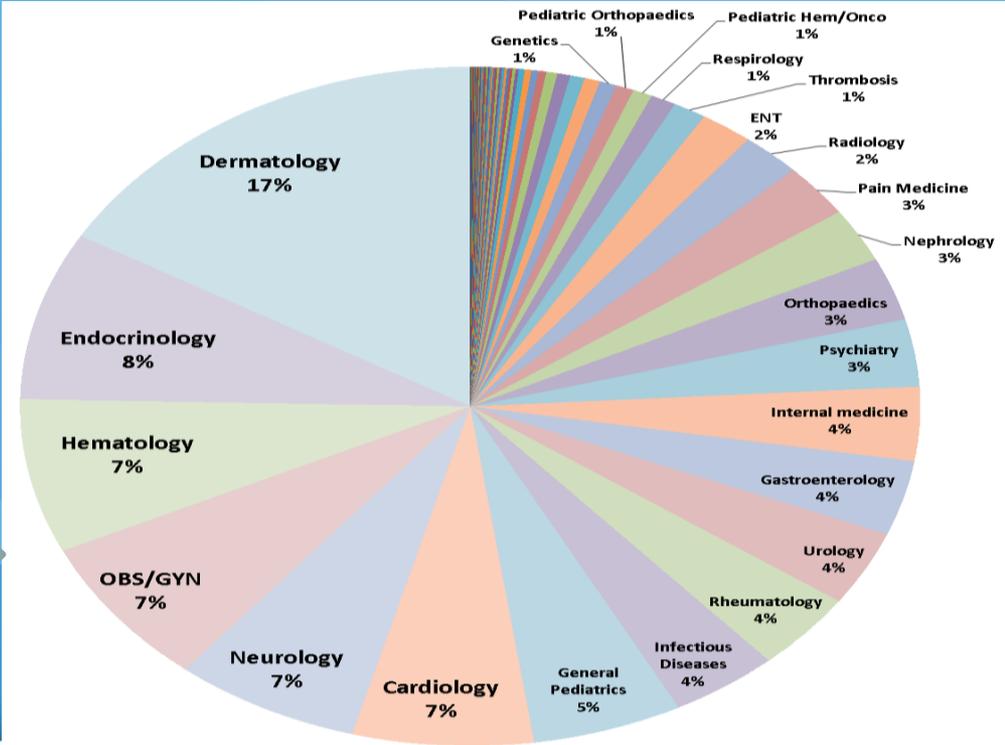
- Robert Lapointe, Telemedicine RPN in City of Lakes FHT, Sudbury, North East LHIN

eConsult Utilization & Feedback

(Based on cumulative Champlain BASE data to May 31st 2015)

- 704 requesting clinicians (585 MDs, 119 NPs)
- 7305 cases processed and closed
- 67 Specialty Services

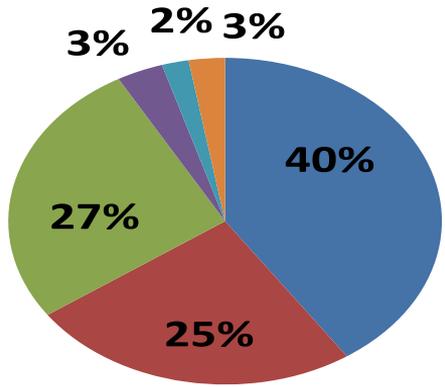
Case distribution across all specialties



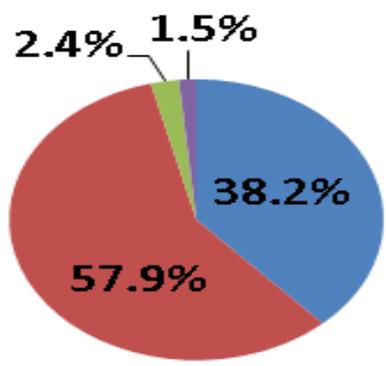
eConsult Outcomes

(Based on cumulative Champlain BASE data to May 31st 2015)

[from requesting clinicians survey responses completed for each case]



- 1. Referral was originally contemplated but now avoided at this stage
- 2. Referral was originally contemplated and is still needed - this eConsult likely leads to a more effective visit
- 3. Referral was not originally contemplated and is still not needed - this eConsult provided useful feedback/information
- 4. Referral was not originally contemplated, but eConsult process resulted in a referral being initiated
- 5. There was no particular benefit to using eConsult in this case
- 6. Other (please comment)



- 1. I was able to confirm a course of action that I originally had in mind
- 2. I got good advice for a new or additional course of action
- 3. I did not find the response very useful
- 4. None of the above (please comment)

eConsult Benefits Evaluation

A formal Benefits Evaluation is being conducted for the pilot which includes collecting quantitative usage data and qualitative survey feedback from participants.

9+ weeks *Baseline Survey Results*

The number of weeks it takes for a specialist to see a patient for non-urgent cases

2 Days

Average specialist response interval **

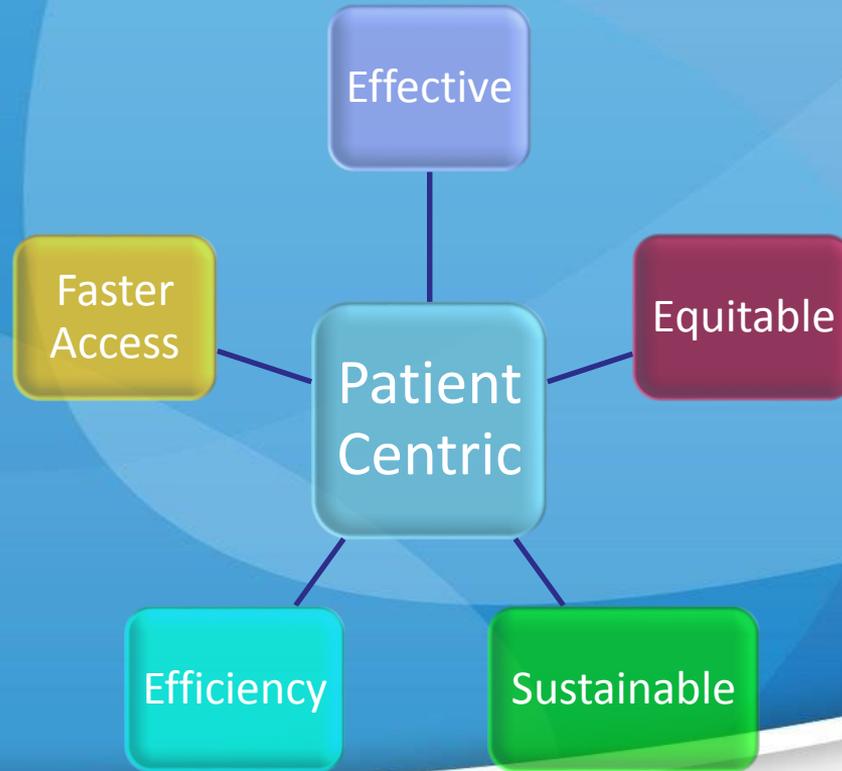


Some eConsults are being sent to Specialists in another geographic region, suggesting that eConsults are not limited to geographical proximity of specialists

5 mins

Quickest response interval (psychiatry!) **

Benefits to Patients and Clinicians



eConsult Video Testimonial



Contact us

- If you have any questions, please email econsult@ontariomd.com

“I submitted a consult one day after work and I got a response from the Dermatologist at 11:45pm on a Friday night with recommendations. I was able to help that patient the next Monday. I had a great suggestion and if that didn’t work, I had a plan, B, C and D. eConsult is going to change medicine, its amazing.”

- Dr. Nicole Shadbolt. Champlain LHIN

Related Publications

- Benefits and Impact of an e-Consultation Service across Diverse Specialties and Primary Care Providers. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23980939>
- Ten Steps to Establishing an e-Consultation Service to Improve Access to Specialist Care. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24073898>
- Building Access to Specialist Care through E-Consultation. <http://www.openmedicine.ca/article/view/551>
- Impact of and satisfaction with a new eConsult service: a mixed methods study of primary care providers. <http://www.jabfm.org/content/28/3/394.full>
- Patients' perspectives on wait times and the referral-consultation process while attending a tertiary diabetes and endocrinology centre: Is eConsultation an acceptable option? <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25797111/>
- Perspectives of Champlain BASE Specialist Physicians: their experiences and recommendations for expanding eConsult services across Ontario. <http://ebooks.iospress.nl/publication/39209>
- What are the costs of improving access to specialists through eConsultation? The Champlain BASE experience. <http://ebooks.iospress.nl/volumearticle/39213>
- The Current State of Electronic Consultation & Electronic Referral Systems in Canada: an Environmental Scan. <http://ebooks.iospress.nl/volumearticle/39214>
- A comparison of referral patterns to a multispecialty eConsultation service between nurse practitioners and family physicians: the case for eConsult. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2327-6924.12266/abstract>