
E-Consult Toolkit

NEWS
September 2018

Policy

FCC Connected Care Pilot and Opioid Legislation Cite E-Consult Among Telehealth Benefits

Recent FCC policy commentary and new healthcare legislation indicate rising awareness of e-consult as a standard method of care delivery.

For example, e-consult is noted in healthcare organizations' comments on the FCC Connected Care Pilot Program that support the program as a foundation for telehealth services. The following statement from American Hospital Association's [comment submission](#) lists e-consult as one of telehealth's "vital" services:

"Telehealth solutions have been shown to significantly improve health outcomes and lower overall healthcare system costs. In particular, telehealth connects patients to vital healthcare services through video conferencing, remote monitoring, electronic consults and wireless communications."

Legislative efforts to improve healthcare delivery and outcomes also now include e-consult among telehealth services. A recent [Lexology](#) article reviews recent opioid legislation that proposes "more treatment options for patients and additional reimbursement for providers who are on the front lines of treating individuals with opioid and other substance use disorders." One legislative proposal, the Opioid Crisis Response Act, includes a requirement that CMS issue reimbursement guidance for telehealth services "including provider-to-provider e-consults." This policy commentary and legislative language demonstrates that e-consult's critical role in improving care quality and

outcomes is now broadly understood.

E-Consult: Potential Driver of Value-Based Payment Reform

In a recent [New England Journal of Medicine](#) commentary, two health policy experts address the current state of value-based care noting its “uneven” adoption and the “still unacceptable gaps in spending and quality.” The authors note how accountability for outcomes in payer value-based payment systems are typically placed on the “shoulders” of primary care providers (PCPs). At the same time, PCPs don’t have the financial or policy influence to drive care infrastructure or process change needed for value-based care.

In particular, the commentary observes that specialists are not generally engaged in population health management programs. E-consults are named as a tool that could enable payers to bring both specialists and PCPs together in delivery of high-value care. “If payers more assertively and directly engaged specialists in such VBP arrangements as bundled payments or new reimbursements for desirable services such as e-consults, they would have incentives to collaborate with PCPs.” The authors conclude that payers need to build infrastructures of technical assistance, such as e-consult, for providers to “avoid many more years of ambiguous results” from value-based payment.

Events

Upcoming CCHP E-Consult Workgroup Webinar and In-Person Workshop

The CCHP E-Consult Workgroup's next monthly webinar will be held on October 3rd from 12 noon to 1 p.m. PT. Join the webinar using the following connections:

Login: <https://zoom.us/j/452285262>

US Dial-in: +14086380986,,452285262#

The CCHP E-Consult Workgroup will hold its in-person workshop in Sacramento on November 7th. Please contact electronic_consult@bluepathhealth.com for more information.

Reimbursement

Managed Care Plans Share E-Consult Progress with California Department of Managed Health Care

The CCHP E-consult Workgroup is working with the California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) to determine how managed care plans can share the progress of their e-consult efforts to improve specialty care and network adequacy with State leadership. The presentation from an August 2018 meeting with DMHC on e-consult and network adequacy reporting can be viewed on the [E-Consult Toolkit State Policy](#) page. To learn more or join payer discussions with DMHC concerning e-consult support contact electronic_consult@bluepathhealth.com.

Adoption

St. Luke's Virtual Healthcare Center Includes E-Consult

St. Luke's is consolidating its telehealth and telemedicine services into a virtual care center, a growing trend among health systems across the country. Designed to provide access to specialty and emergency care for remote, underserved communities, e-consult is included among the many services provided by St. Luke's "hospital without beds."

"We're leveraging technology to extend the reach of our caregivers, spreading clinical services across geographies...to serve patients regardless of where they live and strengthen the connections made by our health system," Dr. Eric Rich, St. Luke's Telehealth medical director, commented in [mHealth Intelligence](#).

E-Consult News is edited and produced by [BluePath Health](#).

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