
E-Consult Toolkit

NEWS
November 2018

Policy

Collaboration Between E-Consult Workgroup and California's State Policy Leadership Advances E-Consult to Tipping Point

This November's convening of the E-Consult Workgroup marked a critical moment in the evolution of e-consult. CMS and Medi-Cal policy revisions for both telehealth use and reimbursement show significant movement toward e-consult sustainability.

"This is an exciting moment for connected health technology and how it works in our healthcare system on the state and federal level. We're seeing huge movement in connected health technology use to provide care to people who need it, when they need it," remarked CCHP's executive director Mei Kwong.

To reach this turning point, the Workgroup has collaborated with California's Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) and Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to examine and explore the use of e-consult in the safety net.

"There was a perception that the department was not accepting telehealth or e-consulting. That wasn't true. The truth was that we didn't know anything about it. This process has been a great learning experience for our team," explained Dan Southard, deputy director of DMHC's Office of Plan Monitoring.

In addition, DHCS has demonstrated its support by including CPT codes for e-consult in its Draft Telehealth Provider Manual for 2019. The Workgroup collected input as part of the DHCS request for public comment [submitted the commentary](#) to DHCS.

“We’re absolutely at the tipping point. It's very exciting to be here ready to see this innovation spread and grow. I want to acknowledge and appreciate the leadership of DMHC and DHCS in working with all of us in the E-Consult Workgroup,” added Richard Thomason, director of policy at Blue Shield of California Foundation.

Additional presentations from the Workshop are available for viewing on the [E-Consult Toolkit Workgroup](#) page.

Evaluation

E-Consult Evaluation Framework Study Identifies Data Consistencies and Gaps and Potential Method for Standardizing Evaluation

Many studies of e-consult demonstrate the value and benefits it brings to specialty care. However, despite the plethora of data on positive provider satisfaction and efficient specialty care access, e-consult still has not been widely adopted. One potential barrier to adoption may be the "lack of comment evaluation metrics," write Delphine S. Tuot, Clare Liddy, et al, authors of a [recent study on e-consult evaluation](#). The study's intent was to sought to "identify gaps in knowledge related to the implementation of electronic consultation programs and develop a set of shared evaluation measures to promote further diffusion."

The study evaluates both published and unpublished data from "early adopter" e-consult implementations at San Francisco Health Network, Mayo Clinic, Veterans Administration and Champlain Local Health Integration Network using Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance (RE-AIM) and the Quadruple Aim frameworks.

The study results uncovered the following commonalities and gaps:

- Similar organizational drivers of electronic consultation implementation included challenges with timely and/or efficient access to specialty care
- Consistent improvement for patient access to timely, perceived high-quality specialty expertise with few negative consequences, garnering high satisfaction among end-users
- Lack of data about patient-specific clinical outcomes

- Lack of policies that provide guidance on the legal implications of electronic consultation and ideal remuneration strategies

In conclusion, study authors find that "effectiveness and implementation metrics rooted in the Quadruple Aim may promote data-driven improvements and further diffusion of successful electronic consultation programs."

Adoption

Boston Children's Hospital Pilots E-Consult to Improve Pediatric Care Coordination

From April 2014 to October 2017, Boston Children's Hospital ran an e-consult pilot with neurology and gastroenterology departments to assess e-consult's impact on communications between primary care providers (PCPs) and specialists. Specialist response times, referral rates, wait times, and completion rates were tracked for the pilot's 510 consults placed by the 82 participating PCPs. Results included the following:

- 88% of e-consult responses were sent within 3 days
- 18% of specialty visits were deferred
- 21% of specialty visits were expedited
- Wait times decreased from 48 to 34 days
- Completion rates increased from 58% to 70%

After the pilot, 89% of PCPs said the "Shared Care" system facilitated better communication with specialists and 92% of reported that the system enabled them to provide superior care. Again, [research](#) shows that e-consult is a feasible method for providing timely access to specialty care.

Education

E-Consult CME Program Launched by RubiconMD

In November, RubiconMD announced the first CME credit program for e-consult submissions. Through the program, started by Nwando Olayiwola, MD, the company's chief clinical transformation officer, primary care providers can gain up to 20 hours of CME credit for using e-consult.

“The evidence continues to support the eConsult not just as an access and efficiency tool, but as a powerful educational tool for clinicians. We are thrilled that we can offer this benefit to our users as another clinical benefit,” said Olayiwola in the [company release](#).

This new program recognizes the educational value that e-consults deliver to primary care providers. Already, since the program was launched on October 1st, 23% of e-consult submissions to the company’s system have been claimed for CME credit.

The E-Consult Toolkit and monthly E-Consult News are made possible by funding from the Blue Shield of California Foundation.

To submit questions, content or share news updates [Contact Us](#).

[Opt out](#) of future issues of E-Consult News submissions.

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

BluePath Health · 929 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. · Suite 101C · Kentfield, California 94904 · USA

