
E-Consult Toolkit

NEWS
May 2019

Issue Contents

- [LA County Department of Health Services Hits 1 Million E-Consults](#)
 - [University of Pittsburg Medical Center \(UPMC\) Launches Infectious Disease Connect](#)
 - [Dallas County Parkland Hospital Demonstrates Cost Savings in GI Care Through Growing E-Consult Program](#)
 - [Veterans Health Administration E-Consult Adoption Reduces Cardiology Clinic Wait Times by 46%](#)
-

Access



LA County Department of Health Services Hits 1 Million E-Consults

This March, seven years after launching e-consult, the LA County Department of Health Services (LADHS) reached an unprecedented milestone of 1 million e-consults.

This groundbreaking moment underscores the efficiency, effectiveness, and reach of LADHS's agency-wide e-consult platform that provides specialty care to LA's community of 500,000 safety net patients.

"E-consult is truly a multi-agency platform servicing the Departments of Health Services, Public Health and Mental Health. In addition to County hospitals and clinics, DHS specialists respond to requests from the jails, juvenile courts and

hundreds of community clinics, enabling our health care providers to access specialty care services in a manner that is uniquely tailored to each patient's specific needs," remarks Paul Giboney, MD, LADHS's director of specialty care.

During its first month of implementation in July 2012, the program provided access to 2 specialties and completed 53 e-consults. Today, LADHS's panel of 600 specialist reviewers across 64 specialties responds to an average of 20,000 e-consults monthly, according to a press release from [Safety Net Connect](#).

University of Pittsburg Medical Center (UPMC) Launches Infectious Disease Connect

The threat of superbugs and hospital-associated infections is [rising](#) nationwide. At the same time, the number of infectious disease (ID) specialists is [decreasing](#). For five years, UPMC has provided access to its ID specialists through e-consults. During this time, demand for infectious disease e-consults increased so much that UPMC decided to launch a new telehealth company called Infectious Disease (ID) Connect to expand access to infectious disease e-consults.

"With ID specialists in short supply, many hospitals, especially smaller, community facilities, are struggling to meet this need. ID Connect was created to fill that gap," [explained](#) Dr. Rima Abdel-Massih, UPMC's director of tele-infectious disease services.

In addition to the 10 UPMC hospitals and 5 non-UPMC hospitals it already serves, ID Connect will initially focus on expanding its services to 4,000 acute care hospitals with fewer than 300 beds. "These smaller facilities face an especially difficult time recruiting and retaining already scarce ID specialists," said Abdel-Massih.

ID Connect's e-consults have been proven to reduce patient transfers to tertiary facilities, reduce health care-associated infections, improve patient outcomes and decrease antibiotic misuse. To expand access to these benefits, the company will hire additional ID specialists outside of UPMC and expand its services first on the east coast and then nationwide.

"Our plan is to continue to grow, at first probably more up and down the eastern seaboard, and then eventually nationally," said David Zynn, ID Connect's

president and CEO.

Dallas County Parkland Hospital Demonstrates Cost Savings in GI Care Through Growing E-Consult Program

In 1894, Parkland Hospital was founded in Dallas, TX with a mission to care for its vulnerable community members. Over the past century, this mission has included the adoption of transformative healthcare models. Today, this innovative approach includes e-consults for moving knowledge rather than patients.

Before the implementation of e-consults in 2016, Parkland's Gastroenterology Clinic had wait times of up to six months.

“We were struggling to see patients in a timely fashion and knew we needed to expand access and cut wait times. But with limited resources, the question was how?” remarks Christian Mayorga, MD and Parkland's senior medical director of medical specialty services in the system's [annual report](#).

By 2018, more than 60% of GI clinic referrals were being handled through e-consults. Based on this success, e-consult is now used system-wide and has enabled the avoidance of 642 face-to-face visits resulting in an estimated global [savings of \\$200,000](#).

Quality

Veterans Health Administration E-Consult Adoption Reduces Cardiology Clinic Wait Times by 46%

New research published in the [American Journal of Managed Care](#) demonstrates that e-consults improve cardiology clinical efficiency. The study, conducted at a Veteran Health Administration (VHA) outpatient cardiology clinic, reviewed a 2-phase test of the clinic's active referral management (ARM) process.

During Phase 1 all incoming e-consults were reviewed by cardiologists and during Phase 2 nurse practitioners and physicians assistants performed initial

e-consult reviews and referred e-consults on to physicians as needed. While the primary benefit of the Phase 2 model over the Phase 1 model was decreased wait times, the following secondary benefits were also uncovered:

- the ability to provide "same-day appointments for walk-ins or urgent referrals";
- better access to pre-operative care could reduce time to operations by 2 to 3 weeks; and
- reduced travel burden for the facility's referral base which covers 200 miles.

In conclusion, the study determined that e-consults are "effective at reducing wait times for our outpatient VHA cardiology clinic."

***Stay up to date on e-consult news, research
and policy with our monthly E-Consult News.
Subscribe.***

The E-Consult Toolkit and monthly E-Consult News are authored and maintained by [BluePath Health](#).

Access the [BluePath Health Blog](#).

Funding and Support is provided by 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.

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, CA 94904 · USA

