View this email in your browser

# E-Consult News

# *October 2019*

## Issue Contents


- Rep. Josh Harder Announces Bipartisan Bill to Support E-Consult Implementation
- E-Consults Improve Access to Care for Patients Facing Inequities
- Regional Health Systems Join Mayo Clinic Care Network, Gaining Access to Specialists via E-Consults
- E-Consult Platforms Are Improving to Meet Provider Workflow Needs
- Otolaryngology and Vascular E-Consults Improve Care and Efficiency
- Upcoming Events


## *Policy*

### Rep. Josh Harder Announces Bipartisan Bill to Support E-Consult Implementation

Rep. Josh Harder (CA-10) announced last week that he will introduce the Specialty Treatment Access and Referrals (STAR) Act, a bipartisan bill to create a grant program to fund telehealth infrastructure. The Congressman's press release identified e-consult as a modality of particular interest, noting “technology and systems already exist in some places to connect doctors and patients, but the Central Valley doesn’t have the level of access we need – this bill would fix that problem and lower costs.”

Among the supporters of the bill is the Healthcare Leadership Council, whose president Mary R. Grealy stated the following:

> "One of the toughest healthcare challenges we face in this country involves how to provide quality care to individuals and families living in areas that have comparatively few healthcare practitioners. We applaud his vision in addressing this critically-needed aspect of our healthcare infrastructure."

Read more here.

## ***Access***

### E-Consults Improve Access to Care for Patients Facing Inequities

A recently published study demonstrates that e-consults enable access to specialty care for patients that face inequities, including "age, socioeconomic status, cultural or racial background, sexual orientation, and functional health." The study includes seven patient cases that "reflect populations that are particularly susceptible to inequities of access to health care services."

The content of these e-consult transactions highlights the value of communication between providers and primary care for quality patient care:

> "eConsult's function as a communication tool for providers… underscores the importance of ensuring that patients have a dedicated PCP, as patients who lack this essential touchstone are limited in their ability to access not just family medicine, but services in the broader healthcare community as well."

In conclusion, the authors write that e-consults are able to "improve equitable access to specialist care, and specialists are able to provide valuable advice on biomedical complexities."

### Regional Health Systems Join Mayo Clinic Care Network, Gaining Access to Specialists via

## E-Consults

In the past two months, several regional health systems joined the Mayo Clinic Care Network to expand care access for their patients through the Network's services, which include e-consults. These new members include Blanchard Valley Health System (OH), Carolinas Hospital System (SC) and Blount Memorial Hospital (TN).

"The opportunity to collaborate with Mayo Clinic...to improve the care we provide patients is compelling," commented Blanchard Valley Health System president and CEO Scott Maloney in a Mayo Clinic press release.

These new members emphasize that e-consult is being embraced by regional facilities for access to national specialists without requiring patient travel.

---

# *Implementation*

## E-Consult Platforms Are Improving to Meet Provider Workflow Needs

Recent news from e-consult vendors highlights efforts to improve e-consult workflow and increase access to specialties. These enhancements reflect an increasing level of understanding of customer demands and needs as e-consult use continues to improve specialty access and care quality.

In early October, AristaMD announced that is has been accepted by Epic App Orchard, enabling providers to initiate e-consults directly from with Epic. This EHR integration is part of AristaMD's focus to reduce the "challenges of change management" through streamlined access to its services, commented CEO Brooke LeVasseur. The company has plans to expand this same integration to other EHRs.

Safety Net Connect has also integrated its e-consult platform Converge with Cerner's EHR for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (LADHS). Through this integration LADHS, which has already completed one million e-consults, expects to further increase ease of access to specialty care

for patients.

In other developments to improve workflow, e-consult vendor ConferMED and referral management platform ReferralMD have entered a partnership to offer a “seamless integrated solution” with minimal workflow disruption. Through this partnership, primary care providers can access e-consult through their EHRs to provide rapid specialty responses for both e-consults and face-to-face referrals.

Overall, these developments illustrate the increasing importance of designing digital health tools to meet provider needs, which ultimately results in improved patient care.

---

## *Efficiency and Quality*

### Otolaryngology and Vascular E-Consults Improve Care and Efficiency

Two recent studies on otolaryngology and vascular e-consults provide further evidence of their ability to provide effective access to speciality care.

In a review of an e-consult pilot at the UC San Diego Medical Center, researchers found that 82% did not require follow-up face-to-face appointments. The authors conclude that e-consult eliminates unnecessary office visits and that its more "widespread use" should be promoted to improve the efficiency of specialty referrals.

A study of vascular e-consults conducted at the Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Healthcare System included a review of both e-consults as well as a data on adverse outcomes within one year and all-cause mortality within one to five years of the e-consults. The results reveal that e-consults provide a "safe and effective means of triaging and providing recommendations for patients with vascular disease."

---

## *Events*

## Upcoming Events

- **E-Consult Workgroup Annual Workshop** -- Monday, November 4th, Sierra Health Foundation, Sacramento
- **California Telehealth Coalition Meeting** -- Tuesday, November 5th, Sierra Health Foundation, Sacramento

To remain up-to-date on future meetings and events, contact electronic_consult@bluepathhealth.com.

---

***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