E-Consult News

COVID-19 and E-Consult

Issue Contents

E-Consult Workgroup, Toolkit and COVID-19 Resources

Thank you to those who attended the March 13th E-Consult Workgroup webinar in response to COVID-19. The E-Consult Toolkit will be updated on a regular basis to offer resources to providers in response to the pandemic. Is your system delivering COVID-19 e-consults? We welcome payer and provider submissions of best practices and services for infectious disease, pulmonology, public health and others, and will provide regular updates through E-Consult News. Contact us at econsulttoolkit@bluepathhealth.com.

Requests for E-Consult and Telehealth Policy and Funding Support

The E-Consult Workgroup requests California stakeholder endorsement for letters we have drafted outlining needs for e-consult and telehealth funding and policy support. They include the following:

- [AB2164](#) creates the E-Consult Services and Telehealth Assistance Program within the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to award grants to health centers to implement and evaluate e-consult programs.
- The E-Consult Workgroup has drafted a [letter to the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom](#) outlining patient and provider needs for telehealth and requests your support.
- The E-Consult Workgroup has developed a [toolkit on policy considerations](#) for e-consult champions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be updated with new information and ideas as state and federal responses develop.

If you or your organization would like to be included in these letters of support, please respond to robby.franceschini@bluepathhealth.com.

Pending CMS Approval of DHCS 1135 Waiver Affecting Billing for E-Consult

On March 16th, the [Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) submitted a Section 1135](#) waiver to seek flexibility in how it administers the Medi-Cal program. DHCS requested confirmation from CMS that all proposed flexibilities listed below apply to all Medi-Cal delivery systems, including Managed Care, County Mental Health Plans, COHS plans and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery Systems (DMC-ODS).

- **Provider enrollment**: streamline enrollment through waiver of certain requirements, including in-state licensing requirements.
- **Provider credentialing:** eases MCO and PIHP requirements to complete the credentialing of providers
- **Alternative places of service for billing:** list includes mobile testing sites and temporary shelters such as commandeered hotels purchased by the state
- **Telehealth flexibility:** for all state plan benefits where medically appropriate
- **Waiver of FTF requirement for FQHCs and RHCs:** would implement AB 1494 (2019), including telephone
- **E-Consult for FQHCs and RHCs:** waives FTF requirements to allow FQHCs and RHCs to bill for e-consults for new or established patients

We will continue to monitor the approval and implementation of the 1135 waiver.

Free Resources for Safety Net in Response to COVID-19

Link to free [Coronavirus Resources for Safety Net Practices](#)

To address the COVID-19 pandemic, e-consult provider ConferMed is offering free access to critical resources for safety net providers. These resources include online access to Infectious Disease and public health specialists with triage procedures and protocols for fighting infections.

This service is exclusively for primary care providers at safety net practices at no cost through ConferMED. As ConferMED is offering this as a free service, they ask that submissions be limited to clinical questions about specific patients and that clinicians limit themselves to one consult until additional funding is secured to support this important effort.

"The most powerful tool for fighting this epidemic is moving knowledge across distances. The countries that have been successful at blunting the epidemic impact have implemented effective containment policies and the way to make effective containment policies is to get information out into the hands of the people on the front lines." Daren Anderson, MD, ConferMED Director

Additional COVID-19 Telehealth Resources

RubiconMD Blog: Infectious Disease Specialists Share COVID-19 Best Practices

RubiconMD's COVID-19 blog is updated frequently to include Infectious Disease specialists' e-consult responses to questions on patient awareness, respiratory precautions, testing, studies and resources.

ConferMED and Weitzman Institute Weekly ECHOs

Weekly Project ECHO Session on COVID-19: Wednesdays at 12 Noon Eastern Time
ECHO faculty include Infectious Disease specialists, primary care providers, infection control nurses and health center operations staff. Sessions start with a brief 5-minute update on the latest COVID-19 developments followed by a 10-minute presentation on health center preparation for patient surges, followed by Q&A and attendee submissions to faculty.

To attend a session or view past presentations, click here.

Workgroup Sponsors

The E-Consult Workgroup is proud to host its 6th annual E-Consult Workshop on November 16th at The California Endowment in Sacramento. The event will engage primary and specialty care providers, public and commercial payers, academic researchers and technology innovators.

We invite organizations to sponsor the E-Consult Workgroup and support this dynamic event. For more information about our sponsorship opportunities, view the program details or contact us at electronic_consult@bluepathhealth.com. Thanks to our initial sponsors below:

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