

E-Consult News

May 2020

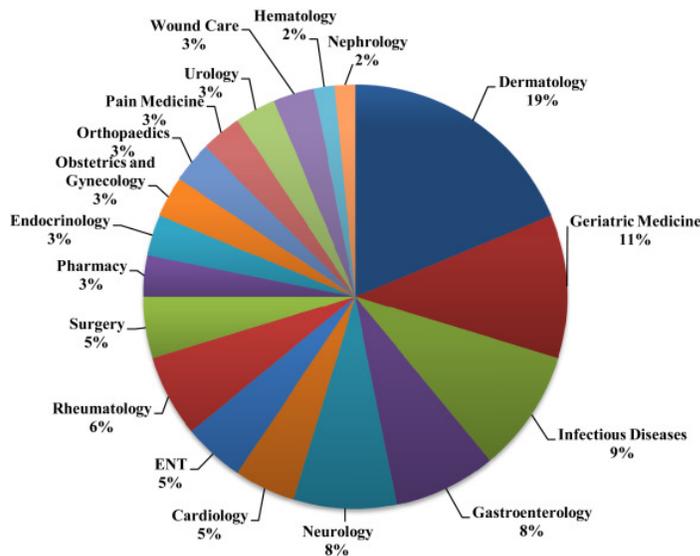
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E-Consults Provide Specialist Access for Long-Term Care Facility Residents

Even before the pandemic outbreak, long-term care (LTC) residents faced challenges to specialty care access. In the first study of e-consult use among LTC facility providers, researchers [analyzed the use of the Champlain BASE eConsult](#) service in LTC homes across Eastern Ontario, Canada during 2018.

Among the 64 e-consult submissions to 23 specialties, 70% of cases were resolved without a face-to-face visit. Among providers, 60% received a new course of action and 31% received confirmation of their current course of action. While providers spoke positively of e-consults' value, they also indicated barriers that included workflow, operational funding, and staff resources. While the study concludes that the implementation of e-consults in LTC residences is feasible, adoption requires financial incentives as well as EMR integration.



Distribution of specialty e-consults sent by 34 primary care providers in 18 Canadian LTC facilities.

ACP Survey Demonstrates Widespread E-Consult Use

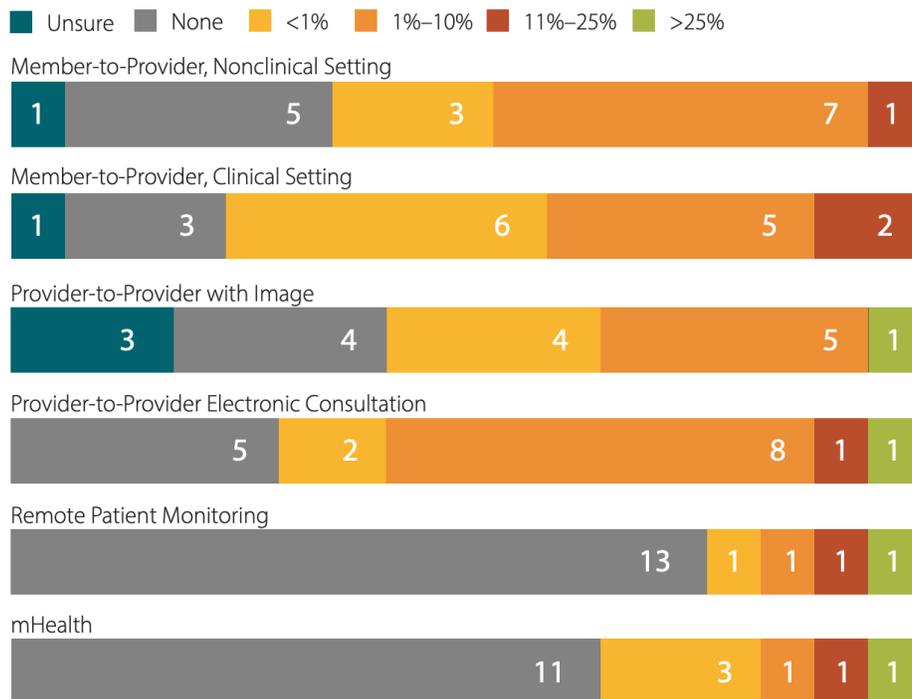
In January 2020, the American College of Physicians (ACP) conducted its [second annual survey of telehealth use by ACP members](#) that include internists, hospital providers and specialists. Among the 231 respondents, 42% had access to e-consults and 58% of those with access used e-consults once a week. In addition, the survey showed that availability of e-consults was similar in both rural and non-rural practices. The survey noted higher use by hospitalists than by subspecialists as a result of subspecialists "not having the technology implemented", which demonstrates "a missed opportunity to improve care coordination and referral communication."

CHCF Report Highlights E-Consult's Prevalence Among Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans

In April, the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) published [the first assessment of Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans' use of telehealth](#) to improve member access to care. BluePath Health conducted the assessment and authored its findings. E-Consult is featured prominently throughout the report. In reviewing overall telehealth use, the greatest number of Managed Care Plans reported use of e-consults ahead of all other telehealth modalities. The top reported barrier to e-consult adoption was the lack of consistent means of payer support. However, plans also reported that they were confident that telehealth would improve access to specialty care, member satisfaction and care coordination, key aspects of care delivery transformation supported by e-consult. Opportunities exist to improve plan evaluation and reporting on telehealth and e-consult programs, such as through member satisfaction surveys and provider directories.

Across Most MCPs, Member and Provider Use of Telehealth Across Modalities Is Low

What percentage of your members or providers use the following form of telehealth?



University of Washington Infectious Disease E-Consult System Study

Researchers at the University of Washington, one of the Association of Academic Medical College (AAMC) CORE (Coordinating Optimal Referral Experiences) sites, have released a [study that assessing infectious disease e-consult use](#). Researchers assessed 328 ID e-consults submitted by 154 providers between April 2018 and August 2019. Most were related to lab results for organisms PCPs would not encounter frequently.

Results included the following:

- 321 (99.1%) received a response within 3 business days
- 278 (84.8%) received specialist recommendations electronically
- 41 (12.5%) were converted to an in-person appointment

The study also found that telephone consults decreased after the implementation of e-consults.

Policy

AB 2164 Amended to Provide Telehealth Reimbursement for RHCs and FQHCs

[AB 2164](#) will create an E-Consult Services and Telehealth Assistance Program to award e-consult grants to community health centers. The bill was amended in Assembly on May 11th to allow community health centers,

i.e. FQHCs and RHCs, to bill for telehealth visits with new patients. The [E-Consult Workgroup has released a new letter of support](#) for the amended bill which has been re-referred to the Committee on Health.

California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation Adopts E-Consult

Safety Net Connect and HubMD recently announced that they will expand e-consult access to include incarcerated patients receiving healthcare in correctional settings. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR) has expanded utilization of e-consult to all of the state's 34 correctional facility sites. Using the Converge platform, PCPs securely contact HubMD specialists for e-consult and develop a care plan specific to the needs of each patient. If a specialty appointment is deemed necessary, the patient can then receive a real-time video consultation with a HubMD specialist.

Events

National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers Webinar on Inpatient E-Consults

In an effort to have safer and more efficient e-consults, the University of Virginia (UVA) implemented the e-consult model for the inpatient setting. In the midst of the COVID-19 response, this also means less exposure and use of PPE and resources. As an early adopter of the e-consults, UVA had a robust ambulatory program. However, inpatient e-consults required certain changes to the work-flow, in addition to applying new billing and coding parameters. Attend the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers' webinar on May 21st from 11 to 12 PT to learn more. [Register here](#).

Next E-Consult Workgroup Webinar - June 11th, 12 to 1p.m. PT

Please join us for the next E-Consult Workgroup webinar on June 11th from 12 to 1 p.m. Pacific Time. This month's webinar will feature Dr. Peter Yellowlees, MBBS, MD, Chief Wellness Officer, UC Davis Health, and Alan Stoudemire Endowed Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, UC Davis, speaking to the recent publication, [A comparison of In-Person, Synchronous and Asynchronous Telepsychiatry: Skills/Competencies, Teamwork, and Administrative Workflow](#).

- Online access: <https://zoom.us/j/176936318>
- Dial-in access: +16699006833,,176936318#

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E-Consult Workgroup Sponsors

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