eConsult
Background and Insights

Dr. Barbara Teal

April 2017
Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

- **Presenter:** Dr. Barbara Teal, Family Physician

- **Relationships with commercial interests:**
  - **Grants/Research Support:** None
  - **Speakers Bureau/Honoraria:** None
  - **Consulting Fees:** None
  - **Other:** None
Disclosure of Commercial Support

- **No Commercial Support**

- **Potential for conflict(s) of interest:**
  - None
Mitigating Potential Bias

- N/A
What is an eConsult?

• **Virtual Care:** An eConsult enables requesting clinicians (family physicians and nurse practitioners) to engage in a secure, electronic dialogue with specialists to manage patient care, without the need for a face-to-face visit.

What is the CMPA’s take on using eConsult to provide patient care?

The CMPA has assessed the eConsult flow of care and determined that it provides an opportunity to improve efficiency, enhance patient care, expand access to specialists and provides a clear audit trail of the specialist’s advice given to the requesting clinician for the suggested care of the patient.
eConsult and eReferral - Differences

**eConsult**

- Referring Physician electronically sends a **question** to a Specialist
- The Specialist answers the question electronically with a message
- Patient is not seen by the Specialist

**eReferral**

- Referring Physician electronically sends a **referral request** to a Specialist
- Patient is seen by the Specialist for an initial consultation
- Triage workflow, clinician communications, appointment scheduling and consultation reporting are facilitated by the eReferral platform
Benefits of eConsult

- **80%** of survey respondents agree that eConsult provides a positive experience for patients.

- **40%** reduction of unnecessary referrals to specialists and focuses treatment for patients on a priority basis.

- **99%** of family physicians and specialists believe eConsult improves patient care.

- **3 Days** as the average response time for eConsult across all regions.

---

1. **Data Source** - OntarioMD Phase 1: Provincial eConsult Initiative Benefits Evaluation Study (Author: Deloitte as objective 3rd party evaluator)

My Story/Journey

- May 2014, accepted in eConsult research project with Champlain BASE from University of Ottawa
- Randomized to paper tracking of referrals for 1 year!
- Submitted monthly list of all referrals from June 2014 – May 2015
- My data: 114 referrals: ranging from 1-16 per month
My story/journey

- 54 referrals out of 114 were for possible surgery
- Most common referrals were General Surgery, Orthopedics, Dermatology, Urology and Gynecology
- Summer 2015 used Champlain portal, then by Fall 2015 was using Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) eConsult platform
My story/journey

- To date: have done 10 eConsults through OTN
- Time of response is usually 2-3 days:
  - fastest - 90 minutes
  - slowest - 4 days - *with specialist apology for delay!
- 3 of 10 needed further referral
- Most responses are thoughtful and invite further dialogue
My story/journey

Examples of my eConsults:

- Urology: Best investigation for male UTI
- Internal Medicine: Patient with low sodium
- Hematology: Patient on Coumadin - should be switched to NOAC
- Gastroenterology: Elevated liver enzymes
Draft Cases

Dr. Barbara Teal | Dr. Vic...

17yo with hypertrophy of his left low...

Draft case

*Referrer

Dr. Barbara Teal, Family/General Practice Medicine

*Specialist

Search for Specialist or Specialty Group...

Patient

*First Name
Enter first name...

Middle Name
Enter middle name...

*Last Name
Enter last name...

*DOB
YYYY-MM-DD

*Gender
Male | Female | Other

*OHIP
Enter patient OHIP number...

Version code

OHIP number not available

☑ Patient has given limited consent

*Title
Enter the clinical question...
Draft Cases

Dr. Barbara Teal | Dr. Vic...
17yo with hypertrophy of his left low...
Draft case

Dr. Barbara Teal
Draft case

*Title
Enter the clinical question...

Enter history of present illness and other relevant data (such as the laboratory tests) to help the specialist provide a more meaningful consult...

High Priority
Save as Draft | Delete Draft | Send

Drag and drop files here
eConsult Compensation

- **Nurse Practitioner Compensation** – Nurse practitioners are salaried for sending eConsults.

- **Requesting Physician Compensation** – Physicians sending an eConsult qualify to bill **OHIP code K738 ($16/consult)** per rules in Schedule of Benefits. The OMA Economics Department authored a [K738 Clarification Guide](#) to assist physicians in correctly using the code.

- **Specialist Compensation** - Specialists are paid an hourly rate of **$200/hour, pro-rated** based on the length of time it takes them to complete an eConsult.
### Volume of eConsult per Speciality – October 2015 to February 2017 (OTN eConsult)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Gastro-Enterology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Oncology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family /General Practice Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaesthesiology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Neuroendocrine Specialist</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Geriatric Psychiatry</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Neurology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Psychiatry</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophthalmology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular Surgery</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Immunology and Allergy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Cardiology</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic Surgery</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Radiology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otolaryngology</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoracic Surgery</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geriatric Medicine</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: GP specializing in Pain Management</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynecologic Oncology</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nephrology</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatology</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastroenterology</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Surgery</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urology</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infectious Diseases</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetrics and Gynecology</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiology</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurology</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrinology and Metabolism</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hematology</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8,700+ Family Physicians

39,500+ eConsults sent

3 Days average eConsult response time

350 Specialists in 100+ specialties
Consulting Specialties

- 1 eConsult - Pediatric Gastro, Neonatal, Medical Oncology
- 100+ eConsults for Internal Medicine, Nephrology, Rheumatology
- 280-400+ eConsults for Endocrine, Dermatology, Hematology
- 18 months with about 39,500+ eConsults sent
Pros and Cons

• Good way to answer “niggling” questions
• Never worry “it’s a dumb question”- can pick a specialist you don’t know!
• Very fast response, some wait / referrals saved
• Focus the referral to the right specialist
• Patients are happy and have always consented
• May save travel for remote / aging population
Pros and Cons

- Need One ID and sign up... improved - now 4 days
- Currently OUTSIDE work flow, needs time to put together
- An email notification is seen daily for tracking
- Now MORE specialist in our region
- Reminder - NOT a FAST TRACK to get patient seen
How do I get eConsult and what are the next steps?

1. EXPRESS INTEREST
   - Send email to econsult@ontariomd.com expressing your interest in using eConsult

2. SIGN UP WITH ONTARIOMD
   - Conduct OneID registration - which involves a **10 minute videoconference/in-person meeting**
   - Complete agreements for compensation (Specialists only)

3. REGISTER WITH OTN
   - Complete Terms of Service agreement with OTN (pre-requisite to agree to electronically to complete your registration)
   - You will then receive “Welcome Note” email from OTN indicating you are live on the OTNHub

4. USE eCONSULT
   - OTN initiate StartSmart to walk them through system and sign on
   - OntarioMD will initiate on-site visit to support ongoing use
Thank You!

Questions?