

# BASE™ eConsult Manitoba



## Fact Sheet for Primary Care Providers

July 2018

### What is an eConsult?

Long wait times and limited access to specialist care remains a major barrier to health care in Canada. The eConsult service is a secure web-based tool that allows primary care providers (PCPs) quick access to speciality care for their patients.

### eConsult is expanding across Canada

eConsult Manitoba uses the BASE™ (Building Access to Specialists through eConsultation) model. In Ontario's Champlain region, BASE™ eConsult has been connecting primary care providers and specialists, with positive results since 2010. In June 2018, The College of Family Physicians of Canada endorsed eConsult methodology as a standard of practice across Canada. Growing evidence has demonstrated that eConsult has tremendous benefits for patients and providers. Specifically, there is evidence that eConsult has the ability to reduce wait times and costs, while delivering high levels of provider and patient satisfaction.

### How does it work?



### A PCP's perspective

"Excellent evidence based recommendation (with attached reference article) that was ... helpful ...patient centered and reasonable. Much appreciated!" – PCP post eConsult survey response, Winnipeg 2018

### An eConsult case example: Cardiology

<b>Day 1</b>	PCP wants to put a patient with ADHD on a stimulant, but notes some past cardiovascular issues resulting in palpitations. PCP contacts cardiologist, provides test results and family history, and asks whether stimulants would be safe for the patient and what monitoring would be necessary.
<b>Day 3</b>	Cardiologist reviews case, has no concerns with patient taking stimulant, tells PCP not to worry.
<b>Day 7</b>	PCP accepts advice, closes case.

### Why Should I use eConsult?

The eConsult Manitoba initiative offers many benefits to PCPs and their patients. The service:

- Offers answers to non-urgent questions within 7 days (average response time = 2 days), often avoiding the need for the patient to be referred for an in person visit
- Provides Manitoba PCPs with access to a variety of specialty services. The most commonly accessed include Dermatology, Hepatology, Cardiology, Nephrology, and Addiction Medicine
- Offers liability protection through the permanent written record of advice given

### How Do I Join or Learn More?

BASE™ eConsult Manitoba is being made available through an initiative lead by Dr. Laurie Ireland, Dr. Alex Singer Dr. Luis Oppenheimer and Dr. Michael Polan. For more information and/or to join eConsult Manitoba, contact Rana McDonald (Research Coordinator) at [mbeconsult@umanitoba.ca](mailto:mbeconsult@umanitoba.ca)

## CMPA Assessment of eConsult

### What is an eConsult?

An eConsult occurs when a primary care provider (PCP) electronically sends a question to a specialist. This can be a simple question (e.g., about a drug dosage) or a more complex question following an initial assessment by the PCP (e.g., sending a question with images of the patient for a virtual dermatology assessment). eConsults may avoid the need to refer a patient to a specialist for diagnosis and treatment.



### How is an eConsult different from an informal consultation?

In many hospitals, when a PCP has a question about a patient, they are able to approach a colleague and ask for advice. These “hallway consultations” happen frequently and though the PCP often gets the advice needed, there is no audit trail of the consultation. There is also no way for the specialist to get paid.

### What is the CMPA’s position on PCPs and specialists 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 PCP for the suggested care of the patient.

### Do you need to obtain your patient’s consent prior to requesting an eConsult?

No, patient consent is implied in an eConsult as this interaction remains within the Circle of Care; however, advising your patient of your use of this tool is not a problem either.

### Who is the Most Responsible Physician (MRP) during an eConsult?

When using the eConsult service, the PCP remains the MRP for the patient, i.e., when a specialist accepts an eConsult, it does not transfer the responsibility of care or decision making to the specialist as may be the case with a normal referral.

### What are the liability considerations for the PCP?

The PCP holds the duty of care to proceed with the eConsult and move the closed eConsult interaction into the patient record.

### What are the liability considerations for the specialist?

Similar to the advice given to a PCP through “hallway consultations,” specialists are accountable for any advice given via eConsult for patient care. eConsult provides a clear audit trail linking the specialist advice to the PCP and is subsequently documented in the patient’s record.