

June 28, 2018

Statement of Support for eConsult as Standard of Practice

On behalf of the College of Family Physicians of Canada I would like to express support for eConsult methodology as a standard practice across Canada.

Wait times for specialist care remain a pressing issue across Canada. The Commonwealth Fund survey of 11 countries, ranked Canada last on access to consulting specialist physicians - 56% of Canadians must wait more than 4 weeks for a specialist appointment, compared to an average of 36% among other countries.

Electronic consultation, or eConsult, offers a promising solution. An eConsult service is a secure online application that allows primary care providers (PCPs) to contact consulting specialists with relevant clinical questions. Responses are provided in a timely manner with advice for how to treat the patient, a recommendation for a referral, or a request for more information.

Growing evidence demonstrates that eConsult has tremendous benefits for patient care. Drs. Clare Liddy and Erin Keely, co-founders of the Champlain BASE™ eConsult service based in Ottawa, have published over 50 peer-reviewed articles demonstrating eConsult's ability to reduce wait times, deliver high levels of PCP, health care provider, and patient satisfaction, and reduce costs. Of its nearly 40,000 cases to date (with an average response time of only 2 days), two-thirds were completed without the patient needing a face-to-face specialist visit.

Policymakers and clinicians have taken notice, and eConsult is spreading to jurisdictions across Canada. eConsult services are now operating in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Ontario government's 2017 budget earmarked funds for eConsult's expansion across the entire province.

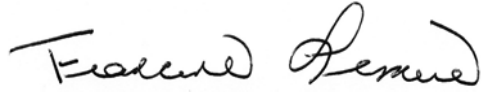
The CFPC named eConsult among its featured [Innovations in Primary Care](#) in 2017, and is proud to participate as a partner on the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement's Connected Medicine e-Collaborative, which supports 11 teams across Canada in implementing consultation solutions including eConsult.

Family physicians value the opportunity to receive convenient consultations through this technology and potentially reduce the number of face-to-face consultations in cases where one is not necessary or can be resolved via an eConsult. The service clearly aligns with the [Patient Medical Home](#) – our vision for the future of family practice that stresses interconnectedness and collaboration. Ultimately it is the patient that receives timely high-quality care based on quick and convenient consultations.

The CFPC is the voice of family medicine in Canada. Representing more than 37,000 members across the country, it is the professional organization responsible for establishing standards for the training,

certification and lifelong education of family physicians and for advocating on behalf of the specialty of family medicine, family physicians and their patients.

We look forward to further collaboration with the eConsult team in this important work.



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