

Insight into Current Referral Workflows

Informing the future of eServices in Ontario

The Ontario eServices Program delivers digital services that support clinical workflows and facilitate smoother transitions in care and an improved patient experience. The following is a summary of surveys conducted to primary care providers and specialists with access to eConsult, in the fall of 2020, in order to understand variation and challenges with existing referral workflows across the province to help guide the planning and development of eServices.



Biggest referral challenges

- Long wait times for patients to be seen (87%)
- Finding appropriate specialist (55%)
- Not receiving confirmation referral was received (54%)
- Lack of availability of desired specialty in region (39%)
- Poor communication following consultation (39%)

*Based on primary care provider survey responses only



Top 5 challenging specialties to refer to

1. Psychiatry (80%)
2. Mental Health and Addictions (71%)
3. Neurology (61%)
4. Dermatology (43%)
5. Gastroenterology (35%)

*Based on primary care provider survey responses only



Consistently challenging specialties across each of the five Ontario Health regions



Desired Improvements to Existing Referral Workflows



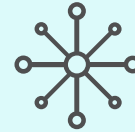
Electronic Referrals vs. Fax

- 77% of primary care would like the ability to send referrals electronically
- 64% of specialists would like to receive more referrals electronically rather than by fax, but some are concerned about how this could be worked into their existing workflow



Provincial Directory of Specialists/Services

- 88% of primary care providers would like access to provincial directory of specialists, including their scope of practice
- 93% of primary care providers would like access to wait times
- 74% of specialists would like to participate in a provincial directory that lists all specialists/specialty services



Central Intake

- 67% of primary care providers would like the ability to refer to a central intake, where referrals are triaged and forwarded based on patient preference, provider preference, wait times, location, etc.
- 41% of specialists would like to participate in Central intake process, while 29% do not want to participate and 25% were unsure.



Improved communication to patients

- 87% of primary care providers would like patients to have access to a patient portal to provide direct access to information on their referral (e.g. status, appt. date)

Over 80% support eConsult as part of the referral workflow



Felt it would be valuable to allow a specialist to provide advice on tests/treatments while the patient waited for their specialist appointment.



Would like it if the specialist could choose to directly respond to a referral request with management guidance if they felt a face-to-face referral was not necessary.



For more information, contact eConsultCOE@toh.ca.

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