Integrating eConsult Into a Primary Care Clinic’s Workflow

When implementing eHealth solutions, effective integration into a clinic’s existing processes is essential to facilitate adoption and sustained use.

The eConsultBASE™ service is a secure web-based tool that allows primary care providers (PCPs) such as physicians and nurse practitioners timely access to specialist advice for all patients and often eliminates the need for an in-person specialist visit.

A primary care clinic in Ottawa, Ontario uses delegates to facilitate eConsult’s implementation.

Use of a delegate

Referral clerks or other staff manage requests on behalf of PCPs, thereby reducing PCPs’ administrative burden.

Median number of eConsults submitted by users

- **With use of a delegate**: 25
- **Without use of a delegate**: 14

Use of a delegate

The volume of cases increased 3.5 fold between the first and last year of the study period.

The integration of eConsult capability into existing clinic workflow with use of a delegate:

- Allowed PCPs to request eConsult using a familiar process
- Minimized challenges associated with adopting a new and unfamiliar technology

Impact on referral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on referral</th>
<th>Percent of cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referral originally contemplated but avoided</td>
<td>36 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referral originally contemplated and still needed</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral not originally contemplated and not needed</td>
<td>29 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral not originally contemplated but ultimately completed</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4 %</td>
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In 66% of cases, patients received specialist advice without needing a face-to-face specialist visit. 100% of patients received timely access to specialist advice.

Reference:

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