

What is eConsult?

eConsult is a telehealth¹ process enabling primary care providers (PCPs) to consult remotely and conveniently with specialists. eConsult has successfully reduced the need for face-to-face office visits by facilitating efficient exchange of information to meet clinical needs.

How does eConsult Work?



PCP's office requests a specialty consult

eConsult begins when the PCP's office requests a specialty consult based on the patient's medical specialty need.



PCP details patient's present illness

PCP details brief history of patient's present illness, pertinent clinical information and poses specific clinical question(s). The PCP's office is able to attach any relevant clinical information such as labs and progress notes. Basic patient demographics and past clinical information are also available for specialist review.



PCP → Specialist

HIPAA compliant email alert is sent to the specialist's private email.



Specialist reviews and responds to the PCP on eConsult

Specialists can login to the secure eConsult system from their email link to review and respond to the PCP using any Web-enabled device. The specialist can request more information, provide treatment recommendations, or recommend a face-to-face visit.



Specialist → PCP

An email alert is sent to the PCP informing him/her that the eConsult has been answered.



PCP and Specialist can continue communications

Back-and-forth communication can continue between PCP and specialist until the issue is resolved.



eConsult appropriately addressed and resolved

If specialist recommends a face-to-face visit between patient and specialist, an appointment will be scheduled (outside of eConsult).

www.eConsultLA.com

“In preparation for an influx of patients due to federal health care reform and California's 1115 waiver, L.A. Care is committed to helping safety net providers increase capacity and improve efficiency and access to care.”

—Dr. Elaine Batchlor
Chief Medical Officer
L.A. Care Health Plan

¹ Telehealth is the delivery of health-related services and health information via telecommunications technologies

Why eConsult?

This expansion of eConsult to the Safety Net is predicated by a successful 18-month pilot conducted between June 2009 through December 2010 with small and solo physician practices, which resulted in:

- Approximately 60% reduction in wait time for appointments
- Out of 829 specialty face-to-face referral requests, about half (383) were appropriately addressed and resolved by eConsult and did not result in face-to-face visits
- An easy to use and flexible system allowing specialists to respond to eConsult email alerts in three days or less
- PCPs feeling more comfortable and better equipped to address the specialty needs for their patients²

Benefits of eConsult

For Patients

- Improved timeliness of access to specialty care
- Improved health outcomes with earlier specialist intervention
- Improved patient satisfaction due to decreased wait times for specialty appointment

For Primary Care Providers

- Improved communication between PCPs and specialists
- Expanded scope of primary care practice
- Increase in high-quality, coordinated care by creating a patient centered medical neighborhood

For Specialists

- Improved pre-visit work-ups
- Decrease in unnecessary/inappropriate specialty referrals
- Reduced “no-show” rates

eConsult is program of L.A. Care Health Plan in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Health Care LA Independent Practice Association, MedPOINT Management and the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County.



For more information please email healthit@lacare.org

² Pilot survey data from June 2009 - December 2010