

**PRIMARY CARE
MODERNIZATION**

eConsults and Co-management

CORE CAPABILITY

Pediatric primary care providers partner with specialists¹ via electronic consults (eConsults) or collaborative care programs (co-management) for treating non-urgent conditions before or instead of referring a patient to a specialist for a face-to-face visit. When appropriate co-management can support continued collaboration between the PCP and the specialist.

DRAFT

HOW CARE WILL IMPROVE

**PATIENTS AND
FAMILIES CAN...**



- Begin treatment sooner in primary care for some health problems rather than waiting for an appointment with a specialist
- Avoid the need for travel, time off work or school or childcare to see a specialist
- Get the benefit of a specialist's advice more quickly and easily, without having to schedule a separate visit
- Have a primary care team that effectively manages more of your healthcare needs
- Pay less out of pocket by having more of your needs met in primary care



**PEDIATRIC CARE
TEAMS CAN...**



- Access specialist expertise to support evaluation and treatment in primary care and improve quality of care
- Manage a wider range of health problems and changes in condition without referring to a specialist
- Expand capacity for prescribing and management of behavioral health and health behaviors through specialist consultation and guidance
- Enable patients to avoid unnecessary specialist visits, testing and procedures
- Enable patients to start treatment for some problems sooner by avoiding delays associated with scheduling specialty visits and other barriers to accessing specialty care (e.g., transportation, time off work, childcare)

PATIENT EXPERIENCE IN PRIMARY CARE MODERNIZATION



Erin is fifteen and has childhood onset Type II diabetes. She and her mom go to her pediatrician's office for a checkup. Her PCP is concerned that she is bordering on morbid obesity and her blood sugar remains uncontrolled.



Erin's PCP has talked with Erin and her family about diet and exercise many times. Erin's mother says the food at school that she gets for free is unhealthy but she can't afford to buy many fruits and vegetables. Erin hates sports.



Erin's PCP has an eConsult with a pediatric endocrinologist who recommends a medication regimen. Her PCP requests another eConsult for advice when Erin has initial side effects to the medication.



Guided by established co-management protocols, Erin's PCP and the pediatric endocrinologist continue working together to manage Erin's condition. Erin's blood sugar control improves with the medication and it is not necessary for her to visit the specialist.



HOW



Care Team and Network Requirements

- Determine which specialties would be best suited to participate in an eConsult or co-management program based on evidence and knowledge about the Network's patients and providers
- Develop arrangements with specialists in relevant disciplines
- Create protocols that maintain clinician autonomy and support identifying appropriate patients, receiving patient consent, scheduling, receipt and review by the specialist, communication of the outcome back to the primary care team and follow up with patients
- Create protocols to guide co-management of patients following an eConsult, when appropriate.
- Train primary care team staff in using secure portals and technology
- Engage clinician champions to promote use and answer questions
- **OPTIONAL** Offer a "fast track" system for patients who have received an eConsult and need a face-to-face visit with a specialist.



Health Information Technology Requirements

- Access to common, secure technology platform such as an Electronic Health Record (EHR) to share information between primary care providers and specialists, including test results and imaging, as appropriate - **OR** -
- Network engages a vendor providing eConsult services to support deployment of the program and meeting HIT requirements
- EHR configuration and protocols to capture eConsult recommendations and treatment plan as presented by specialists
- EHR system able to supply data for measurement and accountability
- Appropriate consent and confidentiality protections

MEASURING IMPACT

✓ Patient Experience

- Improved patient experience with shorter wait times
- Reduced time away from work and/or school for parents (due to travel) and children
- Increased overall satisfaction with provider

★ Quality

- Earlier diagnosis and treatment for some health problems
- Improved outcomes for behavioral health and other conditions that typically require specialty care
- Reduced avoidable ED visits and hospitalizations for ambulatory care sensitive conditions

\$ Cost

- Lower out of pocket costs for patients and families treated in primary care
- Reduced unnecessary use of specialists and duplicative or unnecessary testing and procedures
- Reduced avoidable ED visits and hospitalizations

🔑 Access

- Reduced wait time for diagnosis and treatment for some health problems
- Easier access to expertise of a specialist
- Eliminates access barriers for visits avoided (e.g., transportation, childcare, time off work)

IMPROVING HEALTH EQUITY

Some populations may experience health disparities due to barriers to accessing specialty care. The disparities may result from transportation or other social determinant risks as well as out-of-pocket costs and limited specialist capacity due in part to reimbursement rates. eConsults and co-management arrangements will:

- ✓ **Allow easier access to timely, high-quality specialty care** through electronic consultation with specialists.
- ✓ **Reduce patient and family access barriers** related to provider scarcity and maldistribution, transportation, time off work and childcare.

¹ "Specialist" refers to subspecialty physicians who do not have a primary care specialty, such as endocrinologists, cardiologists, and gastroenterologists. As specialist is the more common term, it is used instead of subspecialist.



LEARN MORE!
rebrand.ly/dropb1e3eb