Growing from the ground up: the Champlain BASE eConsult service’s journey from proof-of-concept to provincial service and beyond

Trillium Primary Health Care Research Day
June 1, 2017

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A collaboration between:
- The Champlain Local Health Integration Network
- The Ottawa Hospital
- Bruyère Research Institute
- Winchester District Memorial

Service Funding
- Champlain Local Health Integration Network
- Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care

Current Research Funding
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Bruyère Research Institute

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Where it all started: Champlain LHIN

- Population of 1.2 million
- One major urban referral centre (Ottawa, ON)
- Surrounding rural communities up to 2 hours away by car
- Demographics and health outcomes similar to the rest of Ontario/Canada
- Long, cold winters (average winter low -11.2°C)
The problem: poor access

“I have been waiting a long time to get my appointment with the specialist”

“I refer and then wait and do not even know if the fax was received…”

“Takes a long time to have an non-urgent patient seen in Endocrinology”

“I am frustrated by my wait list. I can’t ever seem to catch up…”
Champlain BASE* eConsult service has the potential to improve access to specialist care\(^2\)

- A secure web-based service for primary care providers to access specialist care for their patients

*I LOVE eConsult!!!! Great way to get fast information on your patients and often to avoid referral if not indicated.*
Population Health – Access Results*

- Specialists responded to eConsults in a median of 0.9 days
- Over 60% of cases did not require a face-to-face specialist visit
- An unnecessary referral was avoided in 40% of cases.

As of February 28, 2017

1. Referral was originally contemplated but now avoided at this stage
2. Referral was originally contemplated and is still needed - this eConsult likely leads to a more effective visit
3. Referral was not originally contemplated and is still not needed - this eConsult provided useful feedback/information
4. Referral was not originally contemplated, but eConsult process resulted in a referral being initiated
5. There was no particular benefit to using eConsult in this case
6. Other (please comment)
Population Health – Implementation Results

- 22,779 cases completed*
- 1,193 PCPs (1013 MDs and 180 NPs) from 434 clinics in 103 towns/cities have joined the service
- 99 specialty groups available

*As of February 28, 2017
Improved Patient experience through better access, care coordination

• She took photos of both my hands [and] sent them through the eConsult and within 24 hours I was back in the office [with a prescription].

• It was really, really helpful and I was so happy that it was available. […]

• It just kind of gives me a bit of peace of mind
Are we the land of perpetual pilot projects?

- Healthcare innovations in Canada often begin with promise only to stagnate at the end of their funding periods.

- This cycle prevents innovations from spreading new knowledge to other groups, reducing their capacity to grow.

Spread and scale up of Champlain BASE eConsult

“Building on the successful Champlain LHIN BASE eConsult Service, the ministry plans to expand the eConsult service province-wide in 2017–18”

The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement has announced the next phase in a multi-year effort to improve patient access to timely specialist care. The Connected Medicine collaboration … will spread proven Canadian innovations that connect primary and specialty care providers

[1] Building Access to Specialists through eConsultation | © Bruyère Research Institute, Champlain LHIN, The Ottawa Hospital, Winchester District Memorial Hospital


Evidence base

- eConsult has generated a wealth of data from:
  - 24,610 completed cases
  - 1,219 enrolled PCPs
  - 102 specialty groups available

- Findings disseminated through dozens of peer-reviewed articles:
  - 23 published
  - 7 accepted/in press
  - 14 submitted
The Evidence Base for Champlain BASE

Better Population Health
3) Improving access to chronic pain services through eConsultation: A cross-sectional study of the Champlain BASE eConsult service. *Pain Med* 2016 http://painmedicine.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/04/02/pm.pnw038
4) Rationale and model for integrating the pharmacist into the outpatient referral-consultation process. *Can Fam Physician* 2016 http://www.cfp.ca/content/62/2/111?etoc
6) Use of Social Media for Patient Engagement in an Innovative Implementation Project. *Can Fam Physician* Accepted Oct 14, 2016 NEW!
7) Improving access to specialists in remote communities: A cross-sectional study and cost analysis of the use of eConsult in Nunavut. *J Circumpolar Health* Accepted Dec 15, 2016 NEW!
8) Use of Electronic Consultation System to Improve Access to Care in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. *J Ped Hematol Oncol* Accepted Feb 6, 2017 NEW!

Improved Patient Experience
2) Prevention of delayed referrals through the Champlain BASE eConsult Service. *Can Fam Physician* Accepted Jun 9, 2016. NEW!

Lower Costs
2) What are the costs of improving access to specialists through eConsultation? The Champlain BASE experience. *Stud Health Technol Inform* 2015 http://ebooks.iospress.nl/volumearticle/39213
3) What are the cost savings associated with providing access to specialist care through the Champlain BASE eConsult service? A costing evaluation. *BMJ Open* 2016 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4932271/
The Evidence Base for Champlain BASE

Improved Provider Experience
1) Impact of and satisfaction with a new eConsult service: a mixed methods study of primary care providers. *J Am Board Fam Med* 2015
   http://www.jabfm.org/content/28/3/394.full


   http://ebooks.iospress.nl/publication/39209

4) Impact of Question Content on e-Consultation Outcomes. *Telemed J eHealth* 2015
   http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/tmj.2015.0081

5) Harnessing eConsultations to Improve Practice-Based Learning in Endocrinology. *Can J Diabetes* 2015


7) eConsults to endocrinologists improve access and change primary care provider behavior. *Endocrine Practice* 2016

8) Unique educational opportunities arising from electronic consultation services. *Academic Medicine* 2017
   http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Citation/2017/01000/Unique_Educational_Opportunities_for_PCPs_and.19.aspx NEW!

Exploring Policy/Implementation Issues
1) Ten Steps to Establishing an e-Consultation Service to Improve Access to Specialist Care. *Telemed J eHealth* 2013

   http://ebooks.iospress.nl/volumearticle/39214


   https://escarpmentpress.org/hro-ors/article/view/2747

   http://fampra.oxfordjournals.org/content/33/3/274


7) eConsults to endocrinologists improve access and change primary care provider behavior. *Endocrine Practice* 2016

8) Unique educational opportunities arising from electronic consultation services. *Academic Medicine* 2017
   http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Citation/2017/01000/Unique_Educational_Opportunities_for_PCPs_and.19.aspx NEW!
Publishing in not enough

Need to move beyond academic literature

Do briefing notes
Key messages
Look for alignment with current policy platform
In person meetings
Write to the Minister
Highly aligned with Patients First: Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care

• Provide care that is coordinated and integrated, so a patient can get the right care from the right providers.

• Accelerating the adoption of new health technologies and innovations that demonstrate value and contribute to a more productive and sustainable health care system.
Actively seek partnerships

International eConsult Collaborative Network of researchers and knowledge users from Canada and from US (UCSF, MAYO, VA)

National Organizations:

- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement
- Canadian Medical Protective Association
- Canadian Patient Safety Institute
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons
- Canada Health Infoway

Provincial Organizations

- Health Quality Ontario
- MOHLTC
- Québec College of Family Physicians
Implementation tools

• Our team developed a suite of tools and knowledge products:
  • eBook: “Faster Access, Better Care”
  • Business case calculator
  • Website (http://champlainbaseeconsult.com)
  • Briefing notes
  • YouTube videos

• Tools/products are freely available and designed to facilitate adoption of eConsult by innovators in new jurisdictions
For more information, check out our eBook

Available in iBook (for Mac) and pdf (for PC) from www.ChamplainBASEeConsult.ca
Key lessons learned

Stay grounded in research (evidence)

- Imbedded survey questions into usage of service/ routine utilization data
- Quadruple aim framework as a guide
- Go beyond academic dissemination

Team approach (partnerships)

Understand and embrace policy aspects
And finally you need to be positive, patient and persistent.
Thank You!

Questions?