



COLORADO
Department of Health Care
Policy & Financing

1570 Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203

Colorado eConsult Platform

March/April 2022

eConsults provide asynchronous (store and forward) electronic clinical communications between a Primary Care Medical Provider (PCMP) and a specialty provider.

eConsults allow PCMPs to submit electronic clinical questions through an eConsult platform to specialty providers without having to submit a referral when they feel that they cannot provide the direct specialty care a member needs during an appointment.

When a PCMP submits an eConsult to a specialty provider, the specialty provider will be able to review the member's clinical information without the member being present. The specialty provider will be able to provide electronic medical consultative guidance that assists the PCMP in the diagnosis and/or the management of the member's healthcare needs. When the specialist feels that they cannot provide consultative guidance electronically, they will be able to communicate to the PCMP and facilitate the appropriate referral for a face-to-face visit for the member.

The eConsult platform is designed to be embedded within the provider's Electronic Health Record (EHR) to hasten the provider's administration process and not encumber it. The eConsult platform may also include a web portal, web-based applications, and the ability to accept inbound Single Sign On (SSO) requests from other systems.

Some key advantages of utilizing eConsults instead of submitting an in-person referral to a specialty provider include:

- Improving member and provider experience/satisfaction
- Supports earlier diagnosis and health management of chronic conditions
- Expedited turnaround time with care management guidance
- Reduces unnecessary or inappropriate referrals to specialists
- Decrease in health care expenditures
- Providers can practice at the top of their scope



Program Design

In the early development phases of the eConsult project, discussions with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) delayed our timeline due to a clause in the Social Security Act, that would not allow us to reimburse specialists directly for completing an eConsult. The Social Security Act defines medical services for members as providing direct care between providers and members.

After multiple discussions with CMS about our program design, the Department received approval to move forward with the eConsult program. The Department determined that an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) allows more flexibility for specialists to be paid for a completed eConsult versus our original solicitation which was a Request for Proposal (RFP).

The Department recently received approval in March 2022 from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the funding and solicitation. The ITN will be posted in April 2022 for vendors to submit their proposals.

Anticipated Timeline

- **Mid-Spring/Summer 2022**- Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) Posted and Vendor Selection
- **Fall/Winter 2022**- Contract Negotiations
- **Winter 2023**- CMS Review of Contract
- **Spring/Summer 2023**- Implementation Activities
- **Summer/Fall 2023**- eConsult Platform Go Live

Note that the timeline is subject to change without prior notice and is only provided as a reference.

For more information please contact:
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