

Salutation: *	Dr.
First Name: *	Anil
Last Name: *	Maheshwari
Clinic/Company: *	Grandview Medical Centre FHT/Cambridge Memorial Hospital
Role: *	Chief of Family Medicine
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Type: *	Panel Session
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Salutation: *	Dr.
First Name: *	Anil
Last Name: *	Maheshwari
Role: *	Chief of Family Medicine – Cambridge Memorial Hospital
How long have you been using an EMR? *	8 years

Salutation:	Dr.
First Name:	Harpreet
Last Name:	Arora
Role:	Board Member – Grandview Medical Centre
How long have you been using an EMR?	10 years

Salutation:	Dr.
First Name:	Sunjay
Last Name:	Gupta
Role:	IT Physician Lead – Grandview Medical Centre
How long have you been using an EMR?	6 years

Who is your target audience? *	New EMR Users Intermediate EMR Users Advanced EMR Users
Abstract Title: *	Overcoming wait times for specialists using e-consults
Learning Objectives: *	Advantages/disadvantages of e-consults. Which types of issues are appropriate for e-consults. How the e-consult process works.

**Abstract: \***

Given the wait times that primary care providers all struggle with, wouldn't it be great to be able to obtain a specialist's opinion in a more timely manner? In the past we were in the hospital and could get hallway consults from the specialists. This is no longer the case as we are busy in outpatient settings.

While some use text messaging, this is an insecure form of communication. In addition, neither the primary care doctor nor the specialist is remunerated. Some use the phone to obtain opinions and sometimes bill for this service but the consult is not documented properly. This is where e-consults provide an easy to use solution.

At Grandview Medical Centre, our system works through our EMR and patients' demographic information is auto-populated. We are able to cut and paste key parts of the patient's history and attach images and forms. We receive a stipend for sending the referral and specialists receive compensation based upon time spent on a consult. And the e-consults are then saved in a written format.

In Cambridge we have recruited many specialists and family doctors to form a community hub where we are able to get relatively quick opinions on issues where face to face contact is not necessarily needed. For example, in the past, obtaining a psychiatry consult took 6–12 months. But we were able to sign up multiple specialists and now family physicians can obtain fairly rapid opinions from local psychiatrists, often within days.

This is especially handy for patients where we have quick questions such as medication adjustments. This allows us to use the actual referral process for diagnostic clarifications, etc. Psychiatrists are also able to discharge patients back to our care more rapidly because primary care doctors feel more secure about being able to contact them later through enhanced communication such as with e-consults.

Although we have fairly rapid access to our local dermatologist, we have used e-consults with dermatologists outside of our area to ask quick questions (we can attach pictures of rashes) that are amenable to online opinions. We are able to save our patients from having to take time off to visit a specialist.

Due to lengthy wait times in our area, we have used e-consults with gastroenterologists throughout Ontario to obtain timely opinions and alleviate some of the pressure on our local ecosystem. This is especially useful for preliminary workups for patients with vague GI symptoms. If a specialist recommends a timely face to face consultation, we are able to attach their opinion to our referral and send to a local GI specialist, increasing the urgency of the the consult.

In this presentation we will discuss:

Which types of issues are appropriate for e-consults

The advantages (and disadvantages) of e-consults

The steps that we took to get both primary care physicians and specialists on board

The actual referral process

The wait times for e-consults

The feedback from patients, family doctors and specialists