

eConsults For Expanding Psychiatric Care

Andrew M. Land, MD, FACP
Soumya Sivaraman, MD, MSHQS

UAB MEDICINE



The presenters have no conflicts of interest to report

2 UAB Medicine eConsult Service

UAB MEDICINE

Objectives

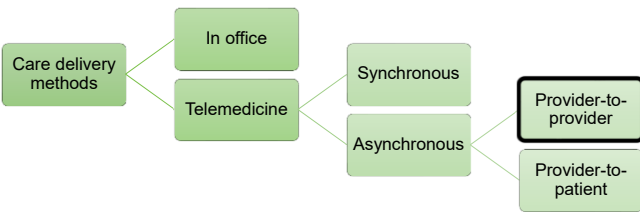
- Understand the relationship of ambulatory interprofessional eConsults to other forms of care delivery
- Understand how eConsults provide value to patients, requesting providers, consulting providers, and the health system
- Understand challenges related to building a new eConsult program and expanding the program to be accessible to outside providers

3 UAB Medicine eConsult Service

UAB MEDICINE

What are eConsults?

Multiple ways to deliver care



Goal:
Provide timely asynchronous provider-to-provider consultation for questions that do not necessarily require a full referral/office visit.

What does that really mean

- Many of these were previously occurring as unreimbursed "curbsides"
- Non-documented, non-billed "simple" questions to specialists, most without any established relationship to the patient
 - ANA is positive, what do I do?
 - Does fracture of x require surgery?
- Specialist may or may not review records to answer the question



7 UAB Medicine eConsult Service



Now...

- Referring provider sends a question to participating specialty in the chart
- Consulting provider reviews chart and answers question in the chart
- Consulting provider bills for the service
- Occurs within 1-2 business days

8 UAB Medicine eConsult Service



Benefits for all parties

Patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster answers • Don't have to travel • Potentially lower co-pay
Referring provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education from experts • Recommendations are documented in chart
Consulting provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation for curbsides • Improved access • Facilitate work-up prior to visit
Health system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access • Lower-cost care • Increased flow into system (external)

9 UAB Medicine eConsult Service

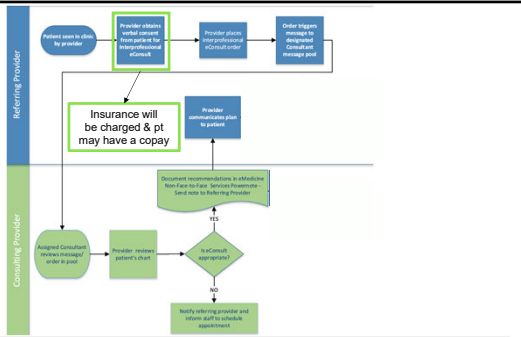


Interprofessional eConsult CPT Codes

CPT	Time	Written Consult Required	Verbal Consult Required	wRVU
99446	5-10 minutes	☑	☑	0.35 wRVU
99447	11-20 minutes	☑	☑	0.7 wRVU
99448	21-30 minutes	☑	☑	1.05 wRVU
99449	31+ minutes	☑	☑	1.4 wRVU
99451	5+ minutes	☑		0.7 wRVU

Note: CPT 99452 (0.7 wRVU) is billed by the requesting provider and requires 16+ minutes in preparing the eConsult request & communicating with the consultant, not with implementing or communicating to the pt.

Process



Result

Visit Information
 Date of Service: 03/10/2024

UAB Billing Number:
Diagnosis: Anemia iron deficiency - ICD10-CM R79.0
Service Provided: Interprofessional eConsult-Consulting Provider
Interprofessional eConsult - Consulting Provider:
 Referring Provider: Land, Andrew M MD.

Consent: Referring Provider obtained consent from patient for interprofessional eConsult.

Reason for Request: Work-up of elevated transferrin saturation.

Total Minutes Spent: 6
CPT Code: 99451: written report.

Impression and Plan: Hx: 52-year-old female without significant medical history. She has a history of taking oral iron supplementation and was noted to have an elevated serum iron with an elevated transferrin saturation. She has stopped supplementation and labs remain elevated. This may be related to high iron intake and/or a hemochromatosis trait. Recommend checking fasting iron studies. If serum iron and transferrin saturation remain elevated, then recommend checking a HFE gene mutation (hereditary hemochromatosis). If HFE gene mutation is present please refer to hematology for discussion of results and prognosis.

Professional Services:
 Attending Antifax: Fax List
 Land, Andrew M MD - Destination: inbox.
 Results In Fax Box.

Important notes

- eConsults are not for emergencies or urgent questions
 - No clinically unstable patients, suicidal patients, etc.
- Important to ask a specific question!
- Not all questions are appropriate for eConsults
 - Complex conditions and questions likely still will need a referral.
 - It is at the discretion of the consulting physician if the patient needs to be seen instead of having an eConsult completed.

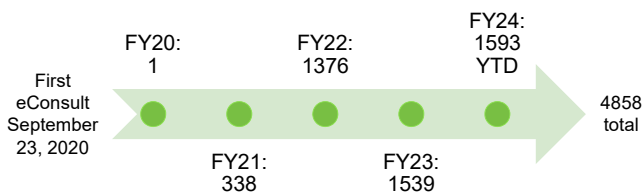
13 UAB Medicine eConsult Service



Our Experience



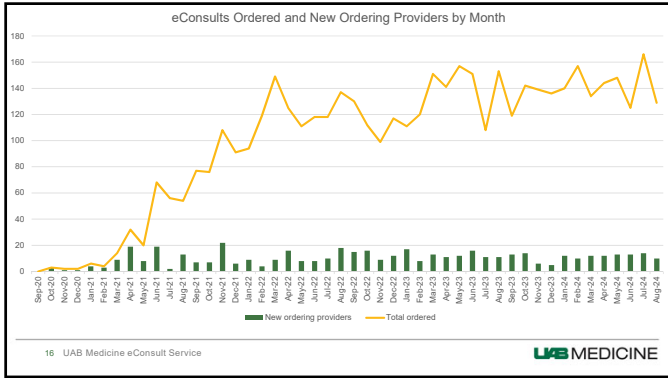
Volumes over time

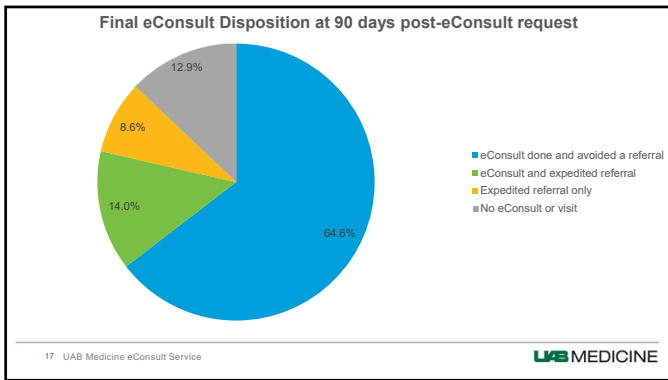


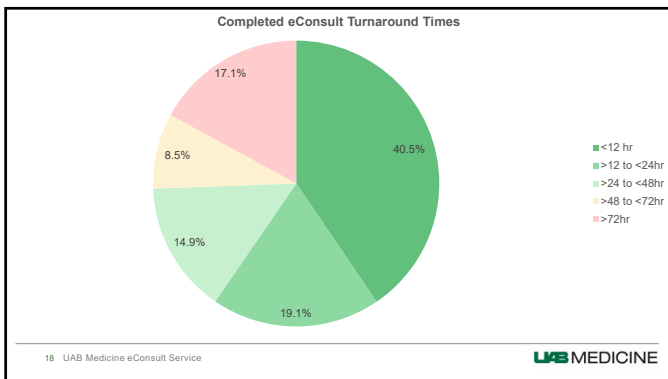
Volumes as of 9/8/24

15 UAB Medicine eConsult Service





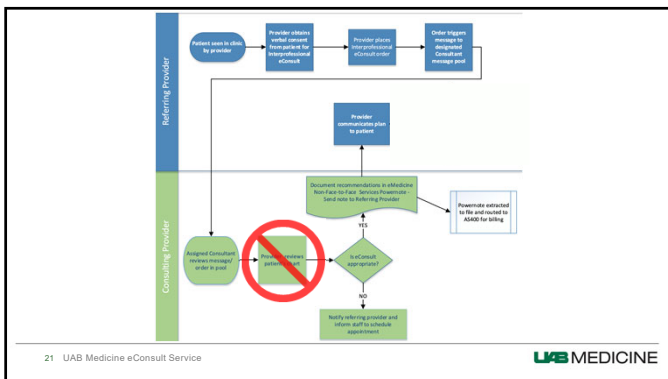




Next steps...

External eConsults

- UAB is a large academic medical center serving Alabama and surrounding states
- Opportunity to partner with physicians in the area to open eConsults outside of UAB
- One big hurdle to overcome...



UAB Medicine Ambassador Program

What is Ambassador?

The UAB Ambassador program is a secure, Internet-based tool that provides referring providers access to their patients' UAB electronic medical record. The Ambassador program gives referring providers the ability to follow patients' inpatient and outpatient visits at UAB Medicine. The program is:

- HIPAA-compliant
- Free of charge
- Mobile-friendly
- Available for MDs, NPs, & PAs



22 UAB Medicine eConsult Service



Challenges experienced

- Extra time required for accessing outside records
- Inconsistent access to outside records especially if patient has never been to UAB
- Outside records formatted differently / difficult to find needed information

23 UAB Medicine eConsult Service



Challenges experienced

- Extra time required for accessing outside records
- Inconsistent access to outside records especially if patient has never been to UAB
- Outside records formatted differently / difficult to find needed information

Solution:

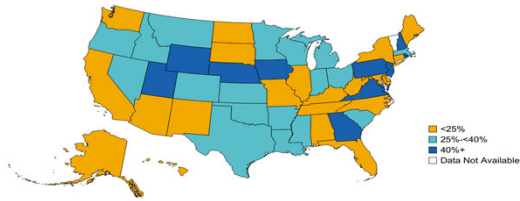
Requesting provider uploads appropriate records which are attached to the eConsult request message

24 UAB Medicine eConsult Service



Psychiatry e Consults

Percentage of need met in mental health care Health Professional Shortage Areas, 2021



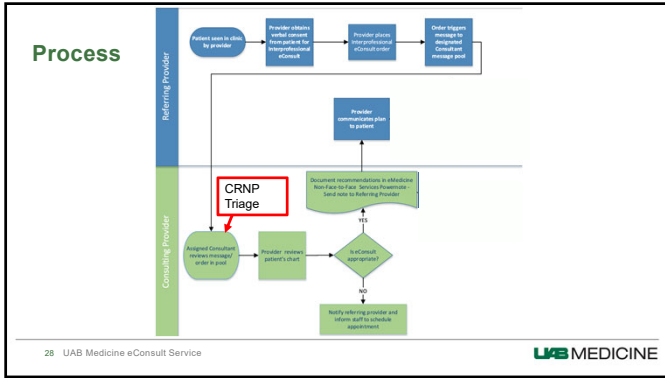
Source: KFF. State Health Facts. Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) as of Sept. 30, 2021. San Francisco, CA: KFF. Accessed July 6, 2022.



Low availability, long wait times, and high geographic disparity of psychiatric outpatient care in the US

Ching-Fang Sun^a, Christoph U. Correll^{b,c,d}, Robert L. Trestman^e, Yezhe Lin^{b,c,d}, Hui Xie^f, Maria Stack Hankey^g, Raymond Paglinawan Uyamatia^h, Riya T. Patelⁱ, Vemmy L. Metsutan^j, Erin Corinne McDaid^k, Atreyi Saha^l, Chaii Kuo^m, Paula Lewisⁿ, Shyam H. Bhatt^o, Lauren Elizabeth Lippard^p, Anita S. Kablinger^q.

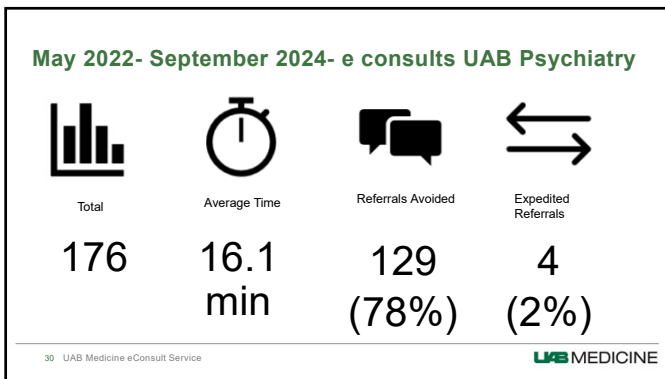
- Longer wait times for in-person appointments compared to telepsychiatry
- Median of 67 days in-person vs Median 43 days telepsych ($p < .01$)




Work Flow

- CRNP triage- Will check once a day and forward to appropriate attendings based on questions and Vocera/ Page them with notification
- Attending schedule: Specialization, Order of e consult
- Attendings have 2 business days to respond
- One-time consults
- Implementation of recommendations up to referring provider
- Template stating that patient was not seen face to face

29 UAB Medicine eConsult Service **UAB MEDICINE**




 PERSPECTIVES

The Practice of Psychiatric E-Consultation: Current State and Future Directions

Thomas C. E. Adams, MD, Christopher T. Lim, MD, and Hsiang Huang, MD, MPH

- Access to mental health care
- PCP satisfaction


- Need more studies on outcomes.

31 UAB Medicine eConsult Service 

References:

Sun, C. F., Correll, C. U., Trestman, R. L., Lin, Y., Xie, H., Hankey, M. S., ... & Kablinger, A. S. (2023). Low availability, long wait times, and high geographic disparity of psychiatric outpatient care in the US. *General Hospital Psychiatry, 84*, 12-17.

Adams, T. C., Lim, C. T., & Huang, H. (2022). The practice of psychiatric e-consultation: current state and future directions. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 30*(3), 191-197.

32 UAB Medicine eConsult Service 

Thank you

amland@uabmc.edu

ssivaraman@uabmc.edu

