Creating Access to Specialty Care Through eConsults

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REFLECTION

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Learning Objectives

- Describe the eConsult value proposition and role of asynchronous care in health system access strategy.

- Discuss the best practices for physician engagement and solution implementation to meet organizational goals.

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Stanford Health Care (SHC) Ambulatory Clinic Encounters

vizient

- FY24 on pace for a 26% increase over pre-pandemic baseline
- Virtual visits and eConsults have become hardwired into our volume and access strategy
- SHC on pace for an additional ~50k NPVs in FY24 (21% increase)

	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Encounters	1,713,066	1,692,147	1,913,627	1,972,965	2,057,604	2,161,136
% virtual	1%	24%	39%	32%	30%	29%

Stanford MEDICINE | Health Care

= % of ambulatory encounters conducted virtually

Data source: Stanford Health Care FY2019-FY2024 internal data
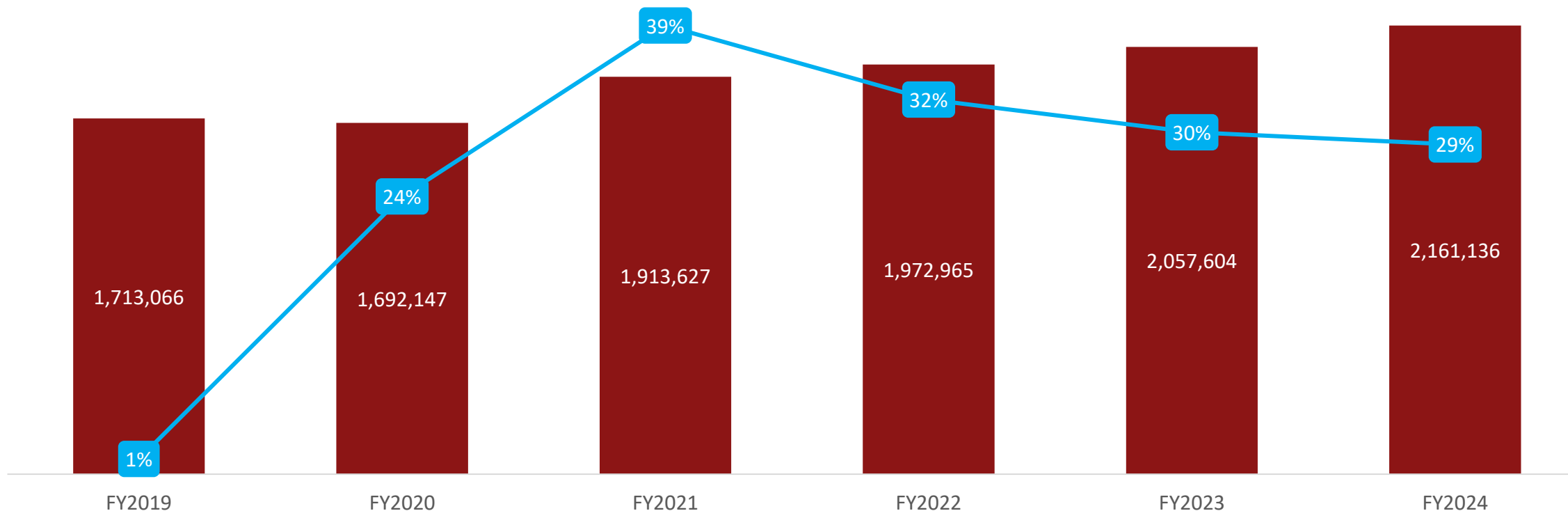
UW Medicine Overview

UW School of Medicine

- Seattle
- Spokane
- Alaska
- Montana
- Idaho
- Wyoming

UW Medicine

- Harborview Medical Center
- UWMC- Northwest
- UWMC- Montlake
- Airlift Northwest
- UW Primary Care and Population Health
- Fred Hutch Cancer Center

Key Affiliates

- Seattle Childrens'
- Hall Health
- Multicare
- Bloodworks Northwest
- VA Puget Sound
- Skagit Regional Health
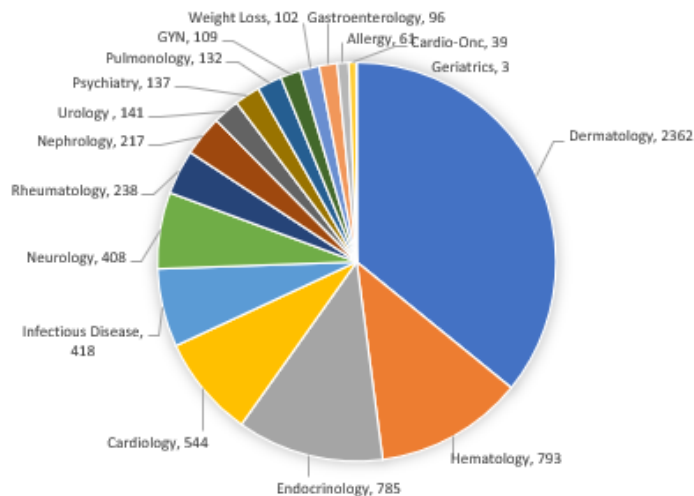- Peace Health

UW Medicine eConsult Snapshot

Available since 2016:

Specialties Live	18
Total eConsults completed	43771
Avg eConsults completed per month (FY24)	808

FY23 FYTD eConsult Volumes by Specialty

Weight Loss, 102 Gastroenterology, 96
GYN, 109   Allergy, 61 Cardio-Onc, 39
Pulmonology, 132   Geriatrics, 3
Psychiatry, 137
Urology, 141   Dermatology, 2362
Nephrology, 217
Rheumatology, 238
Neurology, 408
Infectious Disease, 418
Cardiology, 544
Endocrinology, 785   Hematology, 793

Access Optimization Enhancement:

Alternative selection: When a provider places an order for an in-person referral, a best practice advisory pop up appears, recommending an eConsult. The pop up allows continuation of the in-person referral OR selection of the eConsult alternative.

Specialty	FY23 Average/ month (% contact by eConsult*)	Post "Alternative Selection" Average/month (% contact by eConsult*)
Dermatology-Nov 2023	197 (28.8%)	320 (68.8%)
Neurology-Jan 2024	32 (3.8%)	92 (21.9%)

Endocrinology goes live fall 2024

* Internal UW Medicine Data. (eConsults)/ (eConsults + in person internal referrals)

UW Medicine

Stanford Health Care eConsults

Program Objective

Increase access to specialty care: patients receive specialist advice in 3 business days instead of waiting weeks or months for an appointment

Empower PCPs to manage lower acuity patients: 59% of eConsults successfully avoided a specialty referral

Triage the right patients into specialty appointments: eConsultants triage high acuity patients who need to be seen

What is an eConsult?

An eConsult is a provider-to-provider virtual written consult, completed within Epic in 3 business days.

Ordering provider sees patient and sends clinical question to specialist

Consulting specialist reviews and sends recommendation back to ordering provider

Ordering provider communicates recommendation to patient and manages their care

eConsult specialties

- Allergy
- Derm
- Cardio
- Chem Dep
- Endo
- ENT
- ID

- GI
- Gyn
- Hep
- Neuro
- Nephro
- Ortho
- Pain

- Psych
- Pulm
- Rheum
- Sleep Med
- Urology
- Hematology

Novel Use Cases

- Community eConsults
- Traditional Referral Conversions to eConsults
- Inpatient eConsults

Quality & Success Metrics

Provider Adoption

- Over 28,000 eConsults ordered by Stanford providers since program launch in Oct 2019
- 20 eConsult specialties participating

Clinical Efficiency

- Average eConsult turnaround is 1.2 business days
- 88% of eConsults completed in 5-20 minutes
- 59% of eConsults avoided a referral
- 13% of eConsults avoided a curbside consult

eConsult Resolution

- 77% of cases resolved through eConsult
- 18% of cases converted/triaged through eConsult

Provider Perspective

- "The e-consult service has been transformative for patient care in family medicine. For minor issues and complex issues alike, this service fills a great need in the care of our patients. I have improved my skills and the patients are saved the burden of an additional visit if it is not needed."

  - Dr. Rebecca Seekamp,
  Family Medicine

Lessons Learned

- eConsults are most effective when specific use cases are identified and tools are designed to support them.

- To increase adoption by ordering providers, eConsults need to be net easier to facilitate than in person referrals.

- For scalability of eConsults, partnership with specialty leadership is essential to create a sustainable staffing model.

Key Takeaways

- To build a successful program, eConsults should be integrated into the health system strategy and supported with infrastructure such as dedicated provider FTE, program management resources and analytics.

- Although fee for service revenue can bring incremental value to support the program, the greater return on investment is derived from improvements to access, health system efficiency and population health management in value-based care settings.

- There is an opportunity for benchmarking associations to incorporate asynchronous care into their measurements, recognizing the increasing role that these new modalities play in access to care.

REFLECTION

Questions?

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