

NEWS RELEASE

LEADING CANADIAN HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS TEAM UP TO TACKLE LONG WAITS FOR SPECIALIST CARE

Canadian Phone and eConsult Innovations to be Expanded: Apply Now

Ottawa, Canada – March 7, 2017– The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement today announced the next phase in a multi-year effort to improve patient access to timely specialist care. The Connected Medicine collaboration with [Canada Health Infoway](#), the [College of Family Physicians of Canada](#) and the [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada](#) will spread proven Canadian innovations that connect primary and specialty care providers.

The partners are calling on Canadian healthcare delivery organizations, ministries, and providers to [apply to Connected Medicine](#). Teams from healthcare organizations across Canada and internationally will adapt and adopt two solutions that have improved primary healthcare access to specialist consultation services: [Champlain BASE™ eConsult Service](#) from Ontario and [Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise](#) (RACE™) from British Columbia.

Canada ranks last among 11 comparable countries for patients who wait two months or longer for a medical specialist appointment, with 30 percent of Canadians waiting two months or more.

“Long waits for specialist care are a significant frustration for many Canadians and our country can do better,” said Maureen O’Neil, CFHI President. “Fortunately, there are proven remote consult innovations that are currently meeting the needs of patients and we look forward to expanding their reach.”

Connected Medicine will support teams from a maximum of 15 healthcare organizations across Canada and internationally to adopt innovative models of remote consult. Selected models will facilitate communication among healthcare providers about patient care through tools such as electronic consult (eConsult), telephone consult and mobile application (app).

[Champlain BASE™ eConsult Service](#) is a secure web-based service used in parts of Ontario and Newfoundland. This model of care enables primary care providers (PCPs) to pose non-urgent consult questions to any of 97 specialty areas and receive a timely response (two days on average).

Fast facts about BASE™:

- As a result of the eConsult service, more than 8,000 patients in the Champlain region of Ontario are no longer waiting to see a specialist
- 20,327 eConsult cases have been completed since 2010
- 68 percent of cases are completed without the patient requiring a face-to-face specialist visit
- 39 percent of cases avoid a referral where one was originally contemplated
- \$83.49 is the average cost savings per patient when a face-to-face specialist visit is avoided

[Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise](#) (RACE™) is a telephone advice line launched at Providence Health Care and Vancouver Coastal Health in 2010 that has now spread across British Columbia. Family physicians and other PCPs can call one number, choose from a selection of specialty services, and be routed directly to a specialist's cell phone for "just in time advice." Since its inception, this model has grown from five to 28 specialty areas. RACE™ was enhanced in 2015 with eRACE, a mobile application that enables PCPs to initiate contact via email or text, depending on the preference of the specialist.

Fast Facts about RACE™:

- More than 25,000 calls since 2010
- 60 percent of calls avoided the need for a specialist consult visit
- 32 percent of calls avoided an emergency department visit
- Each call saves an estimated \$200

Connected Medicine follows an approach known as a quality improvement collaborative that brings together interprofessional teams to tackle a common healthcare issue through a team-based improvement project and shared learning. Collaboratives are designed to provide healthcare organizations with the support they need to achieve sustainable improvement: seed funding, an evidence-informed program, patient co-design, performance measurement and evaluation, and coaching to support the implementation of an innovation.

Total seed funding available to the 15 teams is \$600,000, in addition to significant programming and in-kind support from the partners. International applications are welcome, but are not eligible for funding. **The call for applications closes May 4, 2017.**

ABOUT CFHI

The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement is a not-for-profit organization funded by Health Canada. CFHI identifies proven innovations and accelerates their spread across Canada by supporting healthcare organizations to adapt, implement and measure improvements in patient care, population health and value for money. Visit cfhi-fcass.ca for more information.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA

The CFPC represents more than 35,000 members across the country. It is the professional organization responsible for establishing standards for the training and certification of family physicians. The CFPC reviews and accredits continuing professional development programs and materials that enable family physicians to meet certification and licencing requirements and lifelong learning interests. It also accredits postgraduate family medicine training in Canada's 17 medical schools. The College provides quality services, supports family medicine teaching and research, and advocates on behalf of family physicians and the specialty of family medicine.

ABOUT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is the national, not-for-profit organization that oversees the medical education of specialists in Canada by setting high standards for postgraduate medical education and continuing professional development. In collaboration with health organizations and government agencies, the Royal College also plays a role in developing sound health policy in Canada.

ABOUT CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY

Canada Health Inforoute helps to improve the health of Canadians by working with partners to accelerate the development, adoption and effective use of digital health across Canada. Through our investments, we help deliver better quality and access to care and more efficient delivery of health services for patients and clinicians. Inforoute is an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government. For more information about Canada Health Inforoute visit: www.inforoute.ca.

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The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

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