



Edmonton Zone Medical Administrative Committee
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What is it?

- ▶ Telephone line for Primary Care Providers (PCP) to get routine pt advice from specialists
- ▶ Started as a pilot program of the Edmonton North PCN (2017)
- ▶ Comparable to Specialist Link in Calgary
- ▶ Program now accessible by all Edmonton area and North zone PCNs (**1000+ PCPs**)
- ▶ 10 specialties at launch; there are now over **30**
- ▶ **165+** specialists taking calls



How does it work?

- Yes, a human actually picks up the phone
- Available Mon-Thurs 9-6 pm / Fri 9-4 pm
- Uses a cloud-based communications platform called Twilio to enable SMS messaging and VOIP connections
- PCP tells us:
 - Patient information
 - Which specialty they need
 - Reason for their call
- Specialists are provided this information prior (typically via text message)

How does it work?

- ▶ All calls are recorded
- ▶ A summary of the call is transcribed by a trained MOA and sent back to PCP and specialist
- ▶ Summary also features the correct FFS billing code based on the time of day call took place
- ▶ Specialist codes:
 - ▶ 03.01LJ / 0900-1700 (payable @ \$77.35)
 - ▶ 03.01LK / 1700-1800 (payable @ \$114.50)
- ▶ Specialist to specialist calls are welcomed

Notable stats

- Program has received over **3,000+ calls**
- Specialists typically call back during the lunch hour and between 5-6 pm
- Approximately **75%** of calls are returned same day (specialists have ~ 48 hours to respond)
- Top requested specialties ATM:

Internal Medicine Rheumatology
Orthopedics Dermatology

Notable stats

- ▶ Average length of a call is **5 minutes**
- ▶ **86%** satisfaction rate from PCPs (n=156)
- ▶ **100%** satisfaction from specialists (n=84)
- ▶ **96%** of PCPs agreed call provided information that will help them manage other pts in their practice with similar conditions
- ▶ **43%** of referrals are avoided (tricky metric to report)
- ▶ **30%** avoided unnecessary or incorrect imaging from being ordered



How much does it cost?

- ▶ ConnectMD is currently funded by the Edmonton North PCN
- ▶ Program does not have a separate budget
 - ▶ Cost of phone line averages **\$50** per month
 - ▶ Third party transcription is **\$650** per month
- ▶ Evaluation and analysis currently underway to try and determine cost per call
- ▶ Savings to the healthcare system difficult to accurately calculate



During COVID

- ▶ Surge of new specialists joining program (**25+**)
- ▶ **9 new** specialties have joined
- ▶ Call volume has increased approximately **20%**
- ▶ Program remains fully staffed with contingency plans in place
- ▶ Working with the provincial primary health team to support COVID advice line for Central, Edm & North zones:
 - ▶ Internal Medicine
 - ▶ Respirology
 - ▶ Infectious Disease



Future plans

- ▶ Database and website are coming in the next two weeks: www.pcnconnectmd.com
- ▶ Improved communication strategy
- ▶ More comprehensive evaluation framework
- ▶ Physician working group to improve workflow, increase PCP awareness and recruit more specialties
- ▶ Cost-sharing model (other PCNs)

To become a ConnectMD Specialist

- ▶ No contract and no fees
- ▶ Withdraw participation at any time (you'll be the first one, though)
- ▶ Be open to completing one annual survey
- ▶ Call volume is unpredictable but currently reasonable for all specialties
- ▶ E-mail Lindsay with your
 - ▶ Specialty & PRAC ID
 - ▶ Fax number
 - ▶ Any questions or concerns you have





Questions

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