

# eConsult

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. What is eConsult?

eConsult is an asynchronous electronic consultation service between health care providers to coordinate multidisciplinary case review, advisory opinion, and recommendations of care for complicated symptoms or illnesses.

### 2. How does eConsult work?

eConsult is a communication tool that allows HIPAA-compliant correspondence between PCPs and specialists. PCPs, or their designated staff, can log into the eConsult platform to submit specialty consults. The specialist receives a HIPAA-compliant email notification letting them know that a consult is waiting and then logs into eConsult to respond back to the PCP. The PCP and specialist communicate back and forth until the consult is resolved and then the consult is closed. Both PCP and specialist will have the ability to close the consult.

### 3. How long does it take for consults to be responded to using eConsult?

Specialists and PCPs are expected to respond within five business days of dialog submission, however most consults are responded to within 24 to 48 hours.

### 4. What specialties are available through eConsult?

Specialty availability is subject to change however the following specialties are currently available:

- Cardiology
- COVID-19
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Otolaryngology/ENT
- Pain Management
- Palliative Care
- Pediatric Allergy & Immunology
- Pediatric Dermatology
- Pediatric Endocrinology
- Pediatric Gastroenterology
- Pediatric Nephrology
- Pediatric Neurology
- Pediatric Pulmonology
- Pediatric Urology
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
- Pulmonology
- Rheumatology
- Urology

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**5. Is there equipment needed to use eConsult?**

eConsult is a web-based platform that can be accessed from any computer or smart device with internet access.

**6. What are the benefits to using eConsult for health care organizations?**

- Enhances communication between PCPs and specialists
- Expands scope of practice for PCPs
- Increases access to high-quality, coordinated care
- Eliminates out-of-pocket expenses for health care organizations
- Lowers time to care
- Reduces out of network and unnecessary referrals
- Maintains continuity of care

**7. What are the benefits to using eConsult for patients?**

- Reduces distance to care
- Allows quicker access to specialty care services
- Improves health care outcomes with earlier specialist intervention

**8. How much will eConsult cost my health care organization?**

PHC provides the eConsult platform to our contracted health care network at no cost because we believe in the value it brings in gaining access to specialty care services for our members. PHC does ask health care organizations for a commitment to learning and understanding the eConsult platform which is necessary for successful implementation.

**9. Does eConsult replace face-to-face specialty care?**

eConsults are asynchronous health record consultation services that provide an assessment and management service in which the patient's treating health care practitioner (attending or primary) requests the opinion and/or treatment advice of another health care practitioner (consultant) with specific specialty expertise to assist in the diagnosis and/or management of the patient's health care needs without patient face-to-face contact with the consultant.

**Source:** DHCS Medi-Cal & Telehealth Policy.(2019). Retrieved from <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov>

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### 10. Can PCPs bill for eConsults?

Per DHCS and PHC's Telehealth Policy MCUP3113, PCPs are not eligible for reimbursement for eConsults. Only approved contracted specialists participating in PHC's eConsult program can bill PHC for eConsult.

### 11. How can health care organizations participate in PHC's eConsult program?

Health care organizations can contact [eConsult@partnershiphp.org](mailto:eConsult@partnershiphp.org) for an eConsult application or for any questions about the program.

### 12. Who is Safety Net Connect (SNC)?

Safety Net Connect (SNC) was founded by leaders in health information technology who believe that an innovative systems-based approach could solve many of the nation's fundamental health care problems. In 2009, two pioneering health tech companies, NetChemistry and ELM technologies joined together to form SNC to utilize the potential of health care information technology for underinsured and underserved "safety net" populations. In May 2015, Partnership HealthPlan of California (PHC) contracted directly with Safety Net Connect to acquire the eConsult platform in order to provide access to specialty care services to PHC's provider network. To learn more about SNC visit: [safetynetconnect.com](http://safetynetconnect.com)

### 13. Can eConsult services be utilized for non-PHC members?

Any interested provider can contact Safety Net Connect directly to determine how care can be provided to non-PHC members, visit: [www.safetynetconnect.com](http://www.safetynetconnect.com) for contact details.

### 14. Are there any health care organizations currently utilizing eConsult services with SNC to serve PHC members?

PHC provides access to the eConsult platform for many health care organizations across its 14 counties. To view participating locations, please review [PHC's Telehealth Map](#) .