

## **Pilot eConsults Program with Ravenswood Family Health Network: Findings and Lessons Learned Utilizing Digital Solutions to Improve Health Equity and Access**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Equitable access to timely specialty care due to systems-level barriers is a widespread problem for patients served by Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

**Approach:** In July 2022, Stanford Health Care (SHC) piloted an extension of an asynchronous electronic consult program, eConsults, partnering with Ravenswood Family Health Network (<https://ravenswoodfhn.org/>) in an effort to reduce health access disparities for their patients.

**Results:** SHC trained 24 Ravenswood PCPs to utilize this digital platform. From July 2022 to February 2023, 161 total eConsults were placed by 21 unique ordering providers (87.5% adoption rate). The following metrics were averaged over three months. eConsult turnaround time was 1.1 business days, and resulted in 27% new diagnoses, 81% influenced care, and 69% avoided In-Person referral. 85% of eConsults seen by specialists were resolved at primary care level, and 15% of eConsults were recommended to convert to in-person visits. The most requested specialties were: Dermatology (47%), Endocrinology (11%), Infectious Disease, Neurology, and Gastroenterology (9%). Self-reported average time spent on eConsults by specialist was 9.2 minutes (Low 7.5, High 14.9). PCP (n=122) and specialist (n=87) satisfaction with eConsults were 4.9 and 4.7, respectively for 161 eConsults (scale 1-5, 5 is highest). Overall, eConsults were time efficient for specialists and lead to rapid clinical resolution (1.1 days). Many cases were resolved at primary care level or converted to referrals when appropriate.

**Conclusions:** This pilot serves as a proof of concept that academic medical centers can be empowered to utilize existing digital health solutions, thereby facilitating timely and equitable access to specialty care for patients.