RubiconMD

Case Study | Using eConsults to proactively diagnose and treat dermatitis, infections, and skin lesions in primary care.

Collaboration between primary care clinicians and virtual dermatologists improves speed to care, satisfaction, and outcomes.

One of the silver linings of the COVID pandemic was the acceptance and acceleration of telehealth and virtual care. Today, more clinicians are using new, collaborative technology in their daily workflow to improve patient care. At RubiconMD, eConsults between primary care clinicians and virtual dermatologists are one of the fastest-growing and most utilized specialty care services we provide. Offering a novel, accessible approach to diagnosing and managing common skin conditions for both providers and patients proves to quickly enhance patient care and satisfaction in a cost-effective way. This case study explores how dermatologic eConsults are most effectively used in primary care and explores top use cases.

Timely interventions with streamlined communication

Skin conditions such as acne, cellulitis, dermatitis, psoriasis, rosacea, and other skin lesions require prompt attention to prevent exacerbation. But patients often experience long and worrisome delays before getting the care they need. Data shows that 4 in 10 patients report waiting a month or longer for a dermatology appointment.[1] eConsults expedite the diagnostic process, enabling primary care clinicians to obtain a same-day opinion from a dermatologist. This quick turnaround time translates into faster interventions and improved patient outcomes. eConsult platforms offer a secure channel of communication between primary care teams and virtual dermatologists. Clinicians can share patient data, images, and medical history, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the case. This streamlined communication ensures that no critical details are overlooked, resulting in accurate diagnoses and tailored treatment plans.

Personalized care plans & patient education

eConsults facilitate the creation of comprehensive and personalized care plans. A virtual dermatologist can tailor recommendations based on the patient's medical history, specific condition, insurance, and financial status, along with any personal preferences shared by the

4 in 10 wait a month or longer to see a Dermatologist

32 days is the average wait time for a dermatologist

primary care clinician. Recommendations can be reflected in the EHR to stay with the patient's record. This personalized approach enhances treatment efficacy and patient compliance.

In addition to a customized care plan, informed patients are better equipped to actively participate in their own healthcare journey. Virtual dermatologists can also provide educational resources, explaining the nature of their condition, treatment options, and potential outcomes.

Reducing unnecessary referrals & patient burden

Today, primary care clinicians referring patients to a dermatologist can expect an average wait time of 32 days.[2] eConsults empower primary care teams to manage a broader range of cases in-house, thus reducing the need for costly referrals. This shift leads to cost savings for both healthcare systems and patients.

Dermatology eConsults often eliminate the need for patients to travel for specialist appointments, saving both time and transportation expenses. This is particularly impactful for patients with access challenges or limited resources. Primary care teams receive input from a dermatologist on recommended next steps that same day. This can either ease the burden on a patient or begin the rapid initiation of a life-saving care plan with early detection and diagnosis.

Bridging gaps in expertise

eConsults serve as a valuable learning opportunity for primary care clinicians. Through expert guidance, they can expand their dermatological knowledge and gain insights into emerging evidence-based treatment approaches. This acquired knowledge can be applied to future cases, raising the overall standard of care within the primary care setting.

Primary care clinicians play a crucial role in patient care but may face uncertainty or challenges when confronted with complex dermatological cases. By using an eConsult, the primary care clinician can access specialized expertise without the need for a referral. Dermatologists can review cases remotely, providing insightful recommendations that aid in accurate diagnoses and appropriate treatment plans. The visual nature of dermatology is well suited for eConsults making virtual collaboration possible on behalf of the patient.

It's also important to note that the supply of dermatologists today does not meet the current demand.

Accessible follow-ups & continuity of care

eConsults allow patients to seek follow-up advice and clarifications conveniently. This accessibility fosters open and prompt communication between a patient and their primary care provider. Consequently, patients feel supported and engaged in their treatment, leading to higher satisfaction levels.

Continuity of care is a cornerstone of effective healthcare delivery. eConsults promote seamless communication between primary care clinicians and virtual dermatologists, ensuring that patients receive consistent advice and interventions, which not only fosters trust, but contributes to better long-term health outcomes.

Emerging standardized derm workflows

Organizations utilizing RubiconMD dermatology eConsults are now standardizing workflows in primary care for patients with certain dermatologic conditions. When a patient presents with a form of acne, dermatitis, infection, skin lesion, or wound, for example, the primary care team may submit an eConsult **before a referral.**

eConsult cases where a referral was avoided

Click on each case to view the eConsult full transcript

Asymmetric brown to dark lesion

- 58 y.o. female
- Lesion on left earlobe
- PMH of HTN, smoking, RA, depression

View the Case

Cold uticaria differential diagnosis

- 38 y.o. female
- Red, itchy skin, hives
- Present with cold exposure

View the Case

Possible cutaneous larva migrans

- 33 y.o. male
- Hand and foot rash
- Suspect cutaneous larva migrans

View the Case

Veneous status dermatitis

- 75 y.o. male
- R LE rash x 10 months
- Pruritic lesion

View the Case

Itchy, moist lesions

- 39 y.o. female
- Multiple itchy lesions L foot
- Hypothyroidism, depression/anxiety

View the Case

Infected wound

- 36 y/o male
- Stitches on right inner thigh
- Subcutaneous infection

View the Case

Photo sensitivity

- 35 y.o. female
- Severe sunburns, photosensitivity
- Multiple medications

View the Case

Enhanced access delivers outcomes & satisfaction

The integration of primary care with virtual dermatology through eConsults is reshaping the way clinicians care for patients with skin conditions. Enabling rapid access to insights from top dermatologists enhances care plans, treatment outcomes, and satisfaction, but also optimizes resource allocation and cost-effectiveness. RubiconMD data shows that PCPs believe that eConsults improve the care plan 80% of the time and referrals are avoided up to 70% of the time.

As we continue to embrace tech advancements, like eConsults, collaboration between primary care and virtual specialists proves to be an integral component of a patient-centric healthcare ecosystem.

80%
of eConsults improve the care plan

70%
lead to avoided referrals