

Expanding Specialty Access for Rural Primary Care Providers with eConsults

CASE STUDY

Rural primary care providers are often confronting complex patient needs with their patients' well-being hanging in the balance due to limited access to specialty expertise. With direct access to virtual specialty care, Rural PCPs can confidently manage more conditions locally, improving care while decreasing the cost and burden of patient travel.

Rising Rural Health Challenges

Rural communities face significant barriers to specialty care, driven by both a chronic shortage of medical specialists and geographic isolation. While urban areas average 263 specialists per 100,000 residents, rural areas have just 30.¹ Beyond provider shortages, distance to care remains a critical hurdle: one Minnesota study found that rural patients must travel three to four times farther than their urban counterparts to see a specialist.² These obstacles contribute to delayed diagnoses, increased no-show rates, and worsening health disparities for rural populations.

eConsults Empower Rural PCPs

RubiconMD connects primary care providers with board-certified specialists via asynchronous eConsults, enabling timely, convenient, and cost-effective specialty insights. This reduces patient wait days of a month or more down to hours. By resolving up to 70% of cases without the need for in-person specialist visits, eConsults help reduce patient travel, lower costs, and support faster clinical decision-making.



4.9/5

Average PCP rating
of RubiconMD



4/5

Patients prefer eConsults

Delivering Rapid Specialty Care Access for Rural Providers

Delivering care in rural settings often means making critical clinical decisions with limited specialist support. RubiconMD eConsults change that by giving providers immediate access to expertise across 140+ specialties and subspecialties.

Beyond addressing immediate patient needs, eConsults serve as a powerful learning tool for rural clinicians. With each case, providers gain knowledge, refine decision-making, and build confidence in managing cases that require specialist input.

Improving Quality, Cost, and Outcomes in Rural Primary care

With limited specialist expertise nearby and long wait times for referrals, patients can experience delays in diagnosis and treatment—especially those with chronic or multi-system conditions. RubiconMD eConsults bridge access gaps by connecting rural clinicians with top-tier specialty insights—typically in under 3.5 hours.

For rural PCPs, eConsults are more than just a tool for consults—they're a way to strengthen care delivery, enhance clinical confidence, and ensure patients receive high-quality, timely care without leaving their communities.

- **Every avoided referral saves the system hundreds of dollars.** Medicaid programs using RubiconMD eConsults have saved up to \$500 per consult.
- **eConsults support rural provider retention** by delivering ongoing specialty education, expanding PCP capabilities, and reducing patient travel.



90% of PCPs

report that eConsults
improve the care plan



3.5 hours

average specialist
response time

1. American Medical Association. AMA outlines 5 keys to fixing America's rural health crisis. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/ama-outlines-5-keys-fixing-america-s-rural-health-crisis#:~:text=Scott%20said%2C%20there%20are%20about,shortage%20of%20primary%20care%20physicians>.
2. American Medical Association. Rethinking Rural Health. <https://www.aamcresearchinstitute.org/our-work/issue-brief/rethinking-rural-health>

Specialty Areas That Matter Most to Rural Clients

- **Dermatology:** Ideal for image-based review | [RubiconMD eConsult: Rash](#)
- **Cardiology:** Manage stable patients locally | [RubiconMD eConsult: Medication Management](#)
- **Psychiatry:** Support behavioral health integration | [RubiconMD eConsult: Postpartum Anxiety & Depression](#)
- **Endocrinology:** Better diabetes and thyroid care | [RubiconMD eConsult: Diabetes Management](#)
- **Rheumatology & Nephrology:** High-need, low-access fields | [RubiconMD eConsult: CKD Management](#)

eConsults Empower Rural Communities with Quality Specialty Care

RubiconMD helps rural health systems bridge the specialist access gap, improve care quality and provider work flows, and lower the cost of care. Rural clinicians get same-day access to specialists at top medical institutions across the US, ensuring that geography no longer limits access to patient care. Through eConsults, rural providers can meet today's challenges with faster, more equitable care.

To learn more about virtual specialty care solutions, schedule a demo at rubiconmd.com/demo.

