



eCASE (electronic Consultative Access to Specialist Expertise) is a new secure, web-based **prototype** that allows family physicians access to specialty advice on patient care. Through the “dr2dr” website or mobile application GPs can submit a **non-urgent**, patient-specific question to a participating specialty, for a response returned within 7 days. The family physician is able to attach any clinical documentation they feel is necessary for the specialist to make an informed recommendation.

Depending on the individual request, the specialist may:

- Provide the family physician with patient-specific advice in place of a face-to-face specialist visit;
- Request additional information before being able to provide advice; and/or
- Recommend a formal referral, in which case any recommended testing or treatment may be completed before the appointment, leading to a more effective specialist visit.

What kinds of questions should I submit through eCASE?

eCASE is intended for **non-urgent** patient-care questions. Aside from this requirement, we leave it up to you to determine if your concern can be effectively addressed through eCASE. For example, questions that require physical examination would not be appropriate. Some appropriate topics for eCASE may be:

- Questions on medication management: dosing, new therapies, drug interactions;
- Interpretation of images and test results: x-rays, ECGs, blood tests etc.;
- Reassurance of your existing care plan;
- Interim management options while waiting for a specialist consultation.

Which specialty areas participate in eCASE?

There are currently 7 participating specialties on eCASE, and they are as follows: General Internal Medicine, Neurology, Cardiology, Paediatrics, Rheumatology, ENT and Ophthalmology. Throughout the duration of this prototype the Providence Health Care Shared Care team will work to recruit additional specialties, leveraging the strong relationships we have formed through RACE.

What about patient privacy?

The dr2dr system is fully secure; the patient information you submit through this system is safe at all times. However, take care to direct your question to the intended **eCASE Inbox**, and make sure to delete any patient documents you save on your computer when submitting a question or importing the answer into your Electronic Medical Record.

What evidence is there for the value of eConsultation?

Research published by the Champlain BASE™ team have demonstrated a 39% referral avoidance rate through their service, and have shown the service to be highly valued by both primary care providers and patients. Further, **90% of eConsults do not require clarification by either family physician or specialist**. See <http://www.champlainbaseconsult.com/> for more information.



Can I bill for using eCASE?

There are no MSP fees for family physicians to bill for eConsultation. There is a \$10.10 fee code (G10005) enabling specialists to bill for email advice; however we are paying specialists **\$60 per consult** to answer questions. Specialists cannot bill the MSP fee when providing advice through eCASE.

Given the need to gather data to evaluate the prototype, we will send both specialists and family physicians a short 5-question survey through email upon the completion of each eConsult; **you will be paid to \$15 to answer this survey, up to a total of 5 surveys for family physicians. We would also like to conduct short 20-minute interviews with randomly selected family physicians at the end of the prototype, for which they will be paid for one sessional hour (\$132.57).**

What does the CMPA think of eConsultation?

The CMPA is supportive of the Champlain BASE™ service, upon which eCASE is based, in that it improves efficiency, enhances patient care, expands access to specialist advice, and provides an audit trail of specialist advice. Of note, **patient consent is implied** in eConsultation, although we do recommend that you inform your patient that you will be using eCASE. The family physician **remains the most responsible provider** and holds the duty of care to proceed with the eConsult and move the interaction into the patient’s record.

Connection to RACE – How is eCASE different?

Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise (RACE) is a telephone advice service that connects primary care to **urgent** specialty advice. These services are similar in that they both offer a central point to connect family physicians with specialty advice; however, these models differ in a number of important ways:

		
Clinical Focus	Focused on urgent clinical concerns, with a response assured within 2 hours.	Focused on non-urgent clinical concerns, with a response assured within 7 days.
Specialist Availability	Operates from 8:00am – 5:00pm, Monday – Friday.	Questions can be submitted at any time, and specialists may respond at their convenience.
Response Time	A response is assured within 2 hours.	A response is assured within 7 days.
Information sent in the Initial Contact	<i>Unable</i> to transfer images and other clinical documentation.	<i>Able</i> to transfer images and other clinical documentation at family physician discretion.

Who can I contact if I have more questions or would like to participate?

To gain access to a dr2dr account and participate in eCASE, please contact us by emailing ecase@providencehealth.bc.ca.

To sign up contact us at ecase@providencehealth.bc.ca