

pan-Canadian eReferral / eConsult (CA:eReC)

Introduction

The pan-Canadian eReferral / eConsult (CA:eReC) Interoperability Specification is an implementable and testable specification. It defines building blocks to create electronic referrals and electronic consults that will support communication between healthcare practitioners and service providers performing electronic patient referrals and / or electronic consultations. CA:eReC building blocks are configurable to address necessary Canadian jurisdictions variances.

An eReferral is an electronic request for a patient to receive care from a specialist or other services (e.g., home or community care, diagnostic exam). Patient referrals are created, submitted, tracked and managed electronically. It aims to streamline and improve the referral process compared to traditional paper-based methods.

An eConsult is an electronic request from a physician to receive advice from a specialist (i.e., provider-to-provider consultation), enabling asynchronous communication between the requesting physician and specialist. It aims to provide timelier access to specialist advice than waiting for a specialist appointment for non-urgent cases.

Overall, eReferrals and eConsults aim to enhance the quality of patient care, reduce delays in treatment, and improve the overall efficiency of the healthcare system.

The CA:eReC specifications, written in line with international best practices, contain the information necessary for an implementer to read and develop the components necessary for creating, submitting and receiving an electronic referral or consult.

The implementation approach of the pan-Canadian eReferral / eConsult will span a number of releases on a roadmap. Release 1 will focus on elevating the current eReferral specification, developed by the FHIR® Implementers Community - eReferral Workstream and implemented in Ontario, to meet pan-Canadian needs. It focuses on three use cases that have been identified as priority for Canadian jurisdictions, and their supporting requirements, reference architecture, terminology and FHIR® profiles. This release will include supports for creating, submitting and receiving an eReferral, an eConsult, as well as interacting with a Central Intake.

Future releases may incorporate additional use cases and their supporting requirements, reference architecture, terminology and FHIR® profiles. For example, the implementation roadmap will include interactions with a Service Directory.