

WHAT IS ALBERTA'S REFERRAL EXPERIENCE?

Alberta's referral experience should be one where patients and providers access care in a way that is simple, timely and personal.

Simple - there is one process for all referrals that is transparent to patients and providers.

Timely - within a week of the referral submission, communication is returned to the referring provider and patient.

Personal - patients and providers can see where services are provided and what the expected wait time is so they can discuss the care options and make the best choice.

Jodi Glassford, Director

HOW WILL eReferral IMPACT PATIENT CARE?



Above: Booking clerk Sharon Ruff and Radiation Therapy supervisor Trevor Campbell at the Jack Ady Cancer Centre in Lethbridge have helped design the eReferral platform and believe it will ultimately improve wait time for patients.

"We have worked hard to get all our triage and referral guidelines up to date and in place across all our tumour groups, and now getting them into the electronic world is the logical next step," says Dr. Charlie Butts, medical director of Community Oncology.

"By having all the information out there and standardized, hopefully we'll be able to reduce the number of incomplete referrals and shorten patients' wait times for their initial consult with an oncologist".

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Alberta Netcare Training Information

- Receiving sites will receive in-person staff training between November 6th and November 28th. An eReferral Site Representative will contact you to schedule your site's session.
- Training materials for participating clinicians will be available in early November.
- Web-ex training sessions for referring clinicians will be provided beginning Monday, November 18. Information on scheduling your site's web-ex session will be provided in early November.

ELECTRONIC REFERRAL SYSTEMS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

eReferral is exceptional in both scope and potential, but it is not the first electronic referral system to be employed. Finland and Denmark successfully launched the concept in the early 1990's, followed somewhat less successfully by Norway and the Netherlands nearly a decade later. New Zealand, which implemented its first eReferral system in 2007 in one district, has now indicated that by 2014 every district health board in the country will have an eReferral system in place.

In 2004, the Choose and Book system was launched by the NHS in England. Offering patients choice in place, date and time for their first outpatient appointment, the system provides details of services available and current wait times. If the patient needs time to consider options, a reference number and password are assigned and an appointment can be booked via telephone or the internet. However, unlike eReferral in Alberta, Choose and Book does not offer standardized referral criteria, so incomplete referrals may still cause unproductive first appointments.

In 2005 at San Francisco General Hospital, eReferral began through a partnership with the University of California. It provides a system that allows primary and specialty care to co-manage patient care through virtual consults and/or schedule specialist appointments. Integration with the hospital EMS and appointment scheduling has propelled the use of the system, reducing the demand for scheduled appointments by 20%. However, the system is limited to one hospital, 27 primary care clinics and only serves a population of 145,000. Neither does it offer standardized referral criteria for services.

In Alberta, eReferral will not only offer choice for the patient and transparency into wait times, but will also offer service matching while standardizing referral requirements for each specialty. eReferral is a referral solution with scope that has not yet been attempted, and our success will put Albertans on the world stage as innovative leaders in health care.

Did you know?

In New Zealand, the Hutt Valley District Health Board found a cost savings of \$30 per referral after switching from a paper process.

eReferral

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1-866-756-2647
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Alberta
Netcare
ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

NEXT ISSUE:

Hear from the front-line volunteers who participated in User Acceptance Testing of eReferral