



eReferral Offers Nephrology Advice

Automated advice request function will be expanded to include all nephrology reasons for referral

Since [Alberta Netcare eReferral](#) went live in July 2014, referring providers have had the option to send either a request for consult, or a request for advice. The post-limited production rollout [evaluation](#) of eReferral revealed that requests submitted through eReferral were most often for consults and the [largest group of users](#) were referral hubs and breast health clinics. The main benefits of using eReferral are the ability to see wait times, if referrals are being accepted and being able to track if a referral has been successfully submitted and booked.

The advice request function has been used minimally thus far by referring providers, most likely due to the limited groups available in eReferral: hip & knee arthroplasty, and breast and lung cancer care. Other jurisdictions have successfully used advice requests to support community-centred care, reduce unnecessary referrals and better support patients while they are waiting to be seen.

To expand the services being offered and better understand how automated advice requests could improve the patient journey, referring providers will soon be able to submit advice requests for nephrology.

eReferral nephrology advice requests will be available for all 7 reasons for referral to nephrology, including questions about [chronic kidney disease](#), kidney stones and kidney disorders.

Advice requests support physician education and co-management of conditions. An advice request can be used when physicians are unsure if a referral would be appropriate, when considerations

of care are uncertain, or when any other specialty-specific information is uncertain and advice is required.

eReferral referring providers will be able to send a secure communication requesting nephrology advice that would be tracked in the system and replied to within 5 days. Advice requests can be done asynchronously (reply isn't instant), versus more tra-

Nephrology Reasons for Referral

- Acute kidney injury
- Chronic kidney disease (CKD)
- Electrolyte abnormalities
- Hematuria microscopic (blood in urine)
- Proteinuria (abnormal protein in urine)
- Kidney stones
- General nephrology

ditional methods such as a telephone call or hallway consultation. The specialty care responding to the advice request is able to bill for the interaction using the eConsult billing code.

Evaluation of the nephrology advice request function will help to improve its performance, provide working insight to the benefits for users and patients and help clarify how the function may be adopted more broadly.

eReferral nephrology advice requests are expected to launch early summer 2016.