

Improving access to specialist care in correctional facilities through Ontario eConsult



Canadians living in custody experience higher rates of chronic health conditions and blood-borne infections, leading to increased **emergency department visits, hospitalizations and mortality.**

Accessing specialist care is more difficult due to need for:



- Transportation
- Two accompanying prison officers



How could we improve access to specialists for individuals who are incarcerated?

Can Ontario eConsult improve access in federal correctional facilities?



906 eConsults submitted by 21 primary care providers (PCPs) from April 2019-March 2023

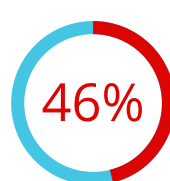


Median specialist response time: 0.9 days

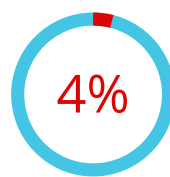


Median specialist billing time: 15 minutes

How did this access to specialist care help people?



Cardiology was the most common specialty consulted from correctional facilities



Cardiology was consulted far less often for the general population

- Most cardiology eConsults involved adjustments to opioid agonist treatment (OAT) to reduce the risk of proarrhythmia

- 765 people underwent OAT in Ontario federal prisons in 2023

eConsult provided **rapid access to cardiology specialists**, supporting PCPs in implementing and managing OAT in federal prisons

Outcomes



- PCPs confirmed their original course of action in **65% of cases**
- PCPs received advice on a new or additional course of action in **34% of cases**
- **54% of cases:** Referral contemplated but now avoided
- **2% of cases:** Referral not contemplated but now initiated

The eConsultBASE™ service improves access to specialist care for patients, facilitating efficient asynchronous communication between PCPs and specialists over a secure web-based platform.