

# President's Letter

November 24, 2016



**Christopher Cox,  
MD, FRCSC, FACS  
President**

## All physicians invited to participate in eConsult project

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to announce the province-wide launch of the e-Consult demonstration project, and extend an invitation to family physicians and other specialists to participate in this innovative project.

eConsult is a secure, web-based tool that allows family physicians to submit non-urgent, patient-specific questions to a participating specialty. Relevant diagnostic testing, visual aids, letters or any other documentation to help inform the consult process may be included. This project is a replica of the Champlain BASE eConsult service developed by Drs. Clare Liddy and Erin Keely.

The purpose of the project is to clearly demonstrate that the implementation of the eConsult service in Newfoundland and Labrador can:

- Reduce wait times for participating specialties;
- Reduce the need for a face-to-face referral in non-urgent cases;
- Enhance communication between family physicians and specialists;
- Provide an opportunity for capacity building/continuing education; and,
- Lessen the burden on rural and remote patients travelling for non-urgent referrals.

Led by Drs. Susan MacDonald, Christopher Kovacs, Jacqueline Elliott and Gerard Farrell, the project is supported through the NLMA/provincial government co-managed Clinical Stabilization Fund (CSF).

As part of this project, an evaluation will be conducted to identify the impacts and potential benefits of the eConsult service for both patients and their health care providers. Similarly, a business case will be prepared to support the full implementation of the eConsult service.

The initial demonstration phase of the project began in September with a small group of family physicians in St. John's and a growing range of specialties including endocrinology, cardiology, nephrology, psychiatry, addictions and chronic pain, public health, geriatrics, pediatrics, palliative care, neurology, hematology and dermatology, to allow the project team to address potential technical issues. We are now inviting interested family physicians and specialists across the province to enroll in the eConsult service.

The eConsult service is easy to use and only requires a standard computer. Thirty minutes of virtual training will also be provided.

Physician engagement is critical as the benefits of eConsult can only be realized through physician participation. If you are a family physician or other specialist interested in using the eConsult service, **please contact Jean Cook, CSF Project Coordinator, by emailing [jcook@nlma.nl.ca](mailto:jcook@nlma.nl.ca).**

Sincerely,

Christopher Cox, MD, FRCSC, FACS  
President

**Newfoundland &  
Labrador Medical  
Association**  
164 MacDonald Dr.  
St. John's, NL  
A1A 4B3  
(709) 726-7424  
Or 1-800-563-2003  
Fax: (709) 726-7525  
[www.nlma.nl.ca](http://www.nlma.nl.ca)  
[president@nlma.nl.ca](mailto:president@nlma.nl.ca)