

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES' ACCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM

## Program Update

The Access Improvement team had a busy Fall as we prepared for the December eReferral release, but that's not all we were up to! In addition to this important eReferral work, we were also working on standardized reporting as part of the Canadian Foundation for Health Improvement. eReferral joined the national collaborative with Calgary Zone Specialist LINK and is working on the Connected Medicine Collaborative.

When it comes to launching a new specialty on eReferral, there are many hours and team members involved. So, what happens? Here's a high-level graphical representation of the process:



Are you an Accuro user? Did you know you can attach a referral letter from Accuro into eReferral? A new [FAQ](#) is available online that explains what you need to do.

On behalf of the Access Improvement team, thank you for all your support. We wish you a prosperous 2019.



### Get in Touch with Access Improvement

If you have any questions, email us at [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca).

For more information about eReferral, including training, visit [eReferral online](#).

For more about QuRE and the Alberta Referral Pathways, visit [Access Improvement](#).

### Unsubscribe

If you'd like to unsubscribe to this newsletter, email [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca)

### Stay Tuned

The next edition of the Access Improvement Report will be released in Spring 2019.

## eReferral Training Available

If you have questions about using eReferral, resources are available:

1. Call the eHealth Support Services team at 1-855-643-8649.
2. [Email](#) the eHealth Support Services team.
3. Visit the [Alberta Netcare Learning Centre](#).
4. Join a Wednesday Webinar. [Email](#) the eHealth Support Services team for more information.
5. Visit eReferral [online](#).

## eReferral Provider Notifications Coming April 2019

Provider notifications will alert eReferral users through email when an eReferral request has been created, modified or changed. To receive provider notifications starting in April 2019, you must have a valid email address entered into "My Details." **Important note:** Please make sure the email entered is one you use regularly otherwise you will not receive important emails or notifications.

To enter or change your email address, follow these steps:

1. Login into Alberta Netcare.
2. On the left-hand side of your screen, click "Common" and then "My Details."
3. Scroll down to "Users" and enter your email address.
4. Click "Update Preferences" to validate your entry.

More information about provider notifications will be emailed to you at this address in the coming months.

## New Specialties Added to eReferral Consult Request

As of Dec. 6, 2018, **Surgery - Breast Health** and **Pulmonary Medicine** in the Calgary Zone, and **Nephrology - Northern Alberta Renal Program (NARP)** in the North, Edmonton and Central AHS Zones are now accepting Alberta Netcare Consult Requests.

A Consult Request allows physicians and clinical support staff to request in-person appointments with specialists. Consult Request also allows you to see associated wait times giving you the option to choose a specific provider/location or a "Next Available" appointment.

The new specialties released in Dec. join five other specialties already accepting eReferral Consult Request, including:

- Gastroenterology – Fit + Non SCOPE (Edmonton)
- Oncology – Breast Cancer (All Zones)
- Oncology – Lung Cancer (All Zones)
- Orthopaedic Surgery – Hip & Knee Joint Replacement (All Zones)
- Urology – Adult services only (Edmonton)

## eReferral Advice Request

eReferral Advice Request (i.e. non-urgent questions that are answered by a specialist within five calendar days) is available for 22 specialties across Alberta including:

Specialty	Zone
AMH – Opiate Agonist Therapy	All
Adult Gastroenterology	All
Cardiology	Central
Endocrinology	Calgary
General Internal Medicine	Calgary
Infectious Disease	Edmonton
Pulmonary Medicine	Calgary
Nephrology	Calgary & Edmonton
Spinal Neurosurgery	Calgary
OBS-GYN	Calgary
OBS-GYN (Maternal Fetal Medicine)	Edmonton
Ophthalmology (Adult & Paeds)	All
Oncology – Breast Cancer	All
Oncology – Lung Cancer	All
Orthopaedic Surgery – Hip & Knee Joint Replacement	All
Otolaryngology	Central
Chronic Pain Medicine	Calgary
Palliative Care Medicine	Calgary
Surgery – Breast Health	Calgary
Urology (Adult)	Central & Edmonton
Urology (Paeds)	Edmonton

For a list of reasons for referral, go [online](#).

# eReferral – A Physician’s Perspective

Traditional methods of sending referrals, including by fax, by mail or by phone, can cause unnecessary delays, missed appointments and have the potential to negatively impact a patient’s health outcome. eReferral was developed to help solve these issues and allows physicians to create, submit, track and manage referrals electronically.

Since 2014, eReferral has been adding new specialties and has since grown to include 22 specialty groups across the province. As a project team working on the back-end implementing eReferral to different zones, we see the system through a different lens, but are making strides to understand how it is working for the physicians, staff and patients who are using it or are affected by it every day.

Over the next several editions, we’ll interview the people who are using eReferral and learn more about the impact it is making in their worlds. In this edition, we chat with Dr. Branko Braam, a Nephrologist, Alberta Health Services Zone Nephrology Section Chief and Kidney Health Translational Research Chair at the University of Alberta about his opinions on the benefits of eReferral.

“Electronic referral systems make monitoring possible,” says Dr. Braam. “eReferral allows us to track and timestamp our referrals. Trackability is the major benefit of this system.”

According to Dr. Braam, who has seen many referrals during his practice, hand-written referrals are hard to read and are not standardized. With eReferral’s standard template, the referrals he receives are easier to review and it’s clear what’s needed to be done for the patient. “A standard form creates the possibility to harmonize referrals,” explains Dr. Braam.

On Dec. 6, 2018, Nephrology – Northern Alberta Renal Program launched eReferral Consult Request allowing physicians in the North, Edmonton and Central AHS Zones to request in-person specialist appointments with a NARP Nephrologist. Edmonton Zone Nephrology is already accepting eReferral Advice Requests giving physicians the opportunity to

ask non-urgent questions to a specialist and receive a response within five calendar days.

“Renal health issues are increasing,” says Dr. Braam. “eReferral Advice Request creates an opportunity for rural community physicians to communicate with Nephrologists online asking questions that can prevent their patients from travelling to see a specialist unnecessarily.”

“Overall, we hope eReferral will facilitate the referral process for our patients and physicians.”

For more information about eReferral, visit us [online](#) or [email us](#).

- *Special thanks to Dr. Braam for contributing to this article.*

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## Central Alberta Cancer Centre & Clinical Breast Health Program winners of this year’s AHS SPIRIT Awards

In the Fall, we nominated the Central Alberta Cancer Centre and Clinical Breast Health Program for AHS’s Central Zone SPIRIT awards and we’re happy to announce they won! As early users of eReferral, they recognized the importance automated referrals play in increasing patient safety and patient choice and were a natural choice for nominating in the Central Zone.

Both teams are committed to standardization and have seen the benefits of using eReferral to manage and track Breast Oncology referrals.

A very special [congratulations](#) to both teams and their staff. Keep up the amazing work!

# Celebrating eReferral Users

Since our launch in 2014, more than 1,000 physicians and clinical support staff have become eReferral users, and of those using eReferral, some have gone above and beyond with their submissions. To thank these high referrers, we arranged mini celebrations to recognize their staff and thank them for using eReferral.

During our visits, we enjoy meeting the teams, hearing their experiences and offer them a chance to ask any questions so we can continually improve our processes. Our visits are also an opportunity for us to see how eReferral is working for the people who are using it every day - some accessing the health system and some using eReferral.

Here are a few snap shots from our visits. While not all of our high referrers are photographed or have had a visit from our team, we want to thank everyone for their use and support of eReferral. We are all transforming Alberta's referral system!



## Our friends at Sphinx Medical Group in Edmonton

Left to right: Terina Douglas, Laura Silver (eReferral Senior Project Manager), Kristine Duteau, Prabpreet Malhi and Heather Parslow.

## Thoracic Oncology team at the Foothills Medical Centre

Left to right: Laura Hampton, Trina Castle, Margaret Pelchat, Fana Solomon, Nadine Strilchuk and Annabelle Wong (eReferral Clinical Design Lead).



## The team at Medicentres in Edmonton

Left to right: Meaghan Quesnel, Becky Goertz, Frank Kress, Nikki Kronen, Julianne Severe, Jennifer Colp (eReferral Communications Advisor) and Jessica Koetze.



## Friends at the Leduc Beaumont Devon Primary Care Network

Left to right: Deanne Harnsen, Shelley Pero, Lauren Yaciuk, Lynn Lourance and Courtney Kowaluk.



## Connect Care & eReferral – How We're Working Together

The Access Improvement team is actively working with Connect Care to determine how and when eReferral will be lifted and shifted into the new platform. Members of our team have participated in Connect Care design sessions and are working with the project team to understand how referrals will be managed in the future.

While Connect Care continues to be built, eReferral will continue to operate and be supported on Alberta Netcare, and all materials our specialties have designed, including reasons for referrals and referral pathways, are being used by Connect Care as a guide for future work.

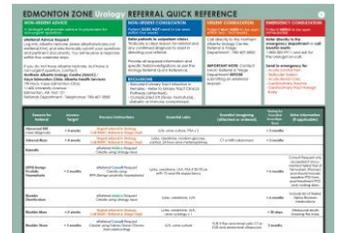
We'll continue to keep you updated on how eReferral and Connect Care are working together. In the meantime, visit [Connect Care](#) online.

## Updated Urology Referral Pathway Now Available

What information do you need to make a referral? Is an ultrasound required? What about lab tests? These answers and more can be found using Alberta Referral Pathway's referral guidelines. These guidelines are developed by specialty-specific working groups to define what is required on a referral and clarify processes to improve Alberta's referral experience.

At present, there are 14 quick references available for Primary Care use. One of these – the Edmonton Zone Urology Quick Reference – has been recently updated and is now available [online](#).

For more information about Alberta Referral Pathways, go [online](#) or [email us](#).

The image shows a screenshot of a document titled "EDMONTON ZONE Urology REFERRAL QUICK REFERENCE". The document is organized into several columns with headings such as "Urology Referral", "Urology Referral", "Urology Referral", and "Urology Referral". Each column contains detailed information, likely including referral criteria, required tests, and specialist information. The document is presented in a structured, table-like format with various colored headers.

## Misericordia Family Medicine Centre Uses Standard eReferral Form

A team of physicians and staff at the Misericordia Family Medicine Centre in Edmonton are improving their referral processes with the testing of a new referral form. The new form, which mimics the standard referral form found on eReferral, is available on Telus MedAccess and was trialed over a two month period with a physician group. The form features macros to allow for the existing EMR information to be inserted into the form thus reducing duplicate data entry.

Over the two months, the majority of results were favourable! Most of the team found the new referral form to be easy to use and a great teaching tool as the new form included all of the components required to complete a comprehensive referral. In addition, the new form did not require any extra time for physicians to fill out, but was slightly cumbersome if a referral was declined as MedAccess required staff to re-submit a new referral if one is declined. Overall, the physicians have recommended using the standard form as they feel it's an excellent tool for improving the quality of referral letters for patients.

## QuRE Update

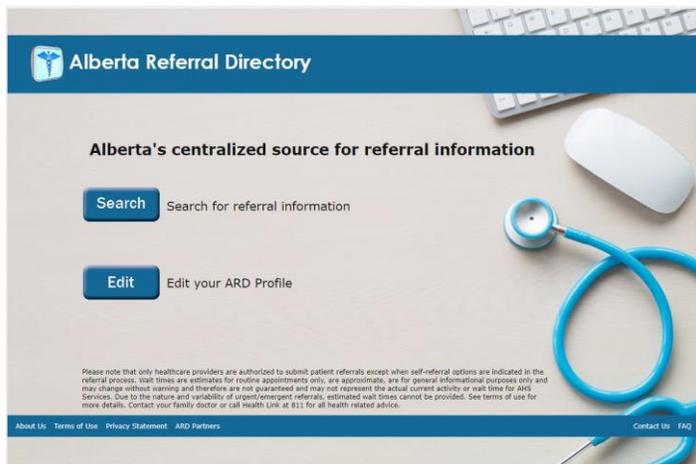
Quality Referral Evolution or QuRE is moving full steam ahead and making exciting progress! Since the summer, we finalized a one-page summary that accompanies the QuRE Checklist and provides more explanation about how to use the Checklist for referrals and consult notes.

We have also begun conversations with Saskatchewan Health who are working on updating their own referral processes. They have created their own referral checklist, modelled off of QuRE's, and are starting to share this with their physicians and clinics.

Our next QuRE workshop at the University of Calgary is scheduled on March 9 and will be educating resident students on the communication skills and tools needed to write quality referral and consult notes.

For more information about QuRE, visit us [online](#).

# Alberta Referral Directory – Authentication-Free Access



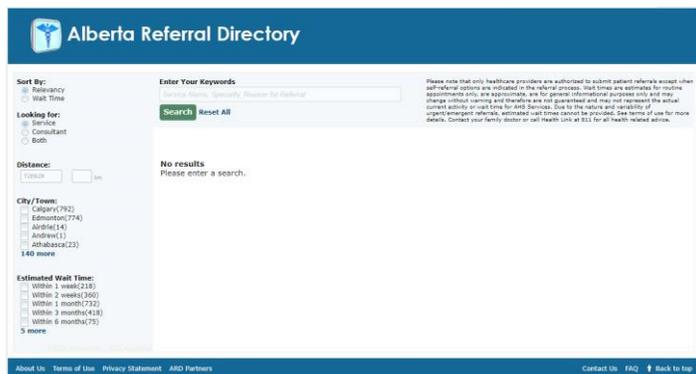
Healthcare providers can now view referral information at [www.albertareferraldirectory.ca](http://www.albertareferraldirectory.ca) without logging in, making it easier to search and select the right services for patients.

The Alberta Referral Directory (ARD) is AHS' designated system of record for referral information. The ARD eases the complexities of the referral process by eliminating the need to search, update and publish documents in multiple places throughout the province. The directory is comprised of service and consultant demographics, referral guidelines, referral forms and detailed instructions to facilitate referral acceptance without delay.



Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and the Alberta Medical Association developed the ARD in 2010 and it is now administered by [Path to Care](#). This program has dedicated resources to support ongoing ARD user experience enhancements, quality assurance initiatives, education and customer service support.

*Why use the ARD?* Having updated referral information in a single source increases the likelihood of sending and receiving appropriate referrals with completed investigations and spending less time resubmitting and redirecting referrals. The ARD can help to reduce work load burden, save time, reduce operating costs and improve patient satisfaction and safety.



**Connect Care and the Alberta Referral Directory**  
Connect Care and the ARD are partnering to ensure that healthcare providers can easily access the ARD when sending referrals. The goal is for providers to have the right decision support resources at their fingertips so they can send complete and appropriate referrals that are accepted without delay. Stay tuned for more details!

For more information, go [online](#) or [email](#) the ARD team.

## What we're reading

- [The British are axing the fax. Will Canada follow suit?](#)
- [Why Doctors hate their computers](#)
- [What docs want from EHR vendors in 2019](#)
- [CMAJ Editorial: A National Electronic Health Record for Primary Care](#)

## Story ideas?

Do you have a story idea? [Email](#) us and we'd be happy to discuss adding your story into the Access Improvement Report.

