

For Immediate Release



Dr. Olayiwola and Colleagues from Community Health Center, Inc. Publish Findings on Electronic Consultations Improving Access to Cardiac Specialty Care

UCSF Center for Excellence in Primary Care director Dr. Nwando Olayiwola and colleagues from Connecticut's Community Health Center, Inc., have published important findings on electronic consultations (eConsults) for cardiology and access to care for underserved patients in the current March/April issue of *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Electronic consultations appear to improve access to and timeliness of referrals to cardiac care for underserved populations, as well as reduce overall specialty utilization and streamline specialty referrals without an increase in adverse cardiovascular outcomes. A randomized controlled trial of 36 primary care physicians at a multi-site health clinic who referred 590 patients to cardiologists found that for the patients in the intervention group who were referred to a cardiologist by the e-consultation pathway (about half were not sent by e-consultation because of urgency or the existence of an established relationship between the patient and a cardiologist), approximately two-thirds never required a face-to-face visit. Moreover, the researchers found e-consultations were completed, on average, almost a month sooner than those sent for a face-to-face consultation (five days versus 24 days, respectively), even for those deemed urgent by the referring physician. A review of six-month follow-up data found fewer cardiac-related emergency department visits for the intervention group. The authors conclude these results show that a substantial number of consultations can be safely and more efficiently managed through a secure electronic exchange of information without compromising the quality of care and with improved convenience for the patient. Moreover, they assert that e-consultations show great promise in advancing integration of the patient-centered medical home into the larger medical neighborhood and potentially mitigating health disparities in access and treatment.

To access the full article, [click here](#).

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**About the Center for Excellence in Primary Care**

The Center for Excellence in Primary Care (CEPC) was created in 2005 to respond to the challenges confronting primary care. The CEPC identifies, develops, tests, and disseminates promising innovations in primary care to improve the patient experience, enhance population health and health equity, reduce the cost of care, and restore joy and satisfaction in the practice of primary care.

The CEPC provides training in team-based care, offers practice facilitation to spur and support transformation, broadens the evidence base through research and evaluation, and advocates for policy that promotes high performing primary care. The CEPC is part of the University of California, San Francisco, Department of Family and Community Medicine and is housed at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General. To learn more about the CEPC, visit: <http://cepc.ucsf.edu/>