

## An interview with the physician founders of Champlain BASE™ eConsult Service

As founders of Champlain BASE, Drs. Clare Liddy and Erin Keely – Lead Faculty for the Connected Medicine Collaborative – provide a physician perspective on the benefits of this ground-breaking model for physician communication.

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### Q. HOW DOES USING CHAMPLAIN BASE COMPARE WITH FACE-TO-FACE SPECIALIST CONSULTS?

“Champlain BASE is an eConsult model that enables asynchronous communication between primary care physicians and specialists. That means primary care can ask targeted questions and have a virtual conversation with a specialist without running into scheduling problems or delays. We’ve found that the quality and detail of the questions asked is much higher than in a usual referral request. This raises specialists’ respect for primary care and helps reinforce a collegial relationship.”

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### Q. HOW DOES THE MODEL IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES?

“Better communication with a specialist provides the patient with a more accurate diagnosis and a more precise treatment plan. It means either the patient gets better faster or is reassured that their health is better than they thought. You can almost hear the patient’s sigh of relief. People feel cared for within an appropriate timeframe.”

“Also, being able to avoid face-to-face visits is a real benefit for patients who have mobility issues or face geographical barriers. Some of those patients would never travel to see a specialist because they simply don’t have the means to make it happen.”

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### Q. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE MODEL FOR PHYSICIAN LEARNING?

“Because our communication is more detailed using Champlain BASE, specialists are able to attach clinical pearls that we wouldn’t have before. This means we’re building capacity in primary care; the physician can apply the learning to the next patient they see. From the specialist’s perspective, because the questions we receive are of such high quality, they prompt us to learn more before we give the answers. It’s been a rich learning experience in that way.”

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### Q. HOW ARE THE PARTICIPATING HEALTHCARE TEAMS REACTING TO CONNECTED MEDICINE?

“Really passionate people are coming into this collaborative. Whether they’re from northern BC, Newfoundland or Alberta, whether they’re the primary care lead, patients or from government, people see Connected Medicine as a real opportunity to make a difference. Canada’s geography means some teams are really remote and in need of this model.”

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### Q. HOW HAS THE PATIENT PERSPECTIVE INFORMED THIS COLLABORATIVE?

“The involvement of patients and the patient voice at the table has been fascinating. It’s good to see the teams are really committed to patient engagement. It’s not just patient representation, but real listening.”

“One of our most powerful interactions with patients has been about privacy issues. Patients of course want due diligence with respect to privacy. However, their attitude in general is: ‘We trust you. What are you waiting for and why are you letting privacy concerns get in the way of my care?’ Patients have shifted the conversation from being about risk aversion to being about risk management and practicality. They want the service.”