

SYSTEM INTEROPERABILITY (supporting a “connected health system”)

WHAT WE HEARD

What was the goal of this member engagement?

Members have told us that a move toward system interoperability (a “connected health system”) is integral in the development of a provincial digital health strategy. As the Ministry of Health moves toward identification of a digital solution(s) to support this, ensuring they are equipped with an accurate sense of physician needs is crucial.

To support this, Doctors of BC held two DTO-supported webinars to enable family and specialist physicians to provide input on their clinical needs related to interoperability. This included validation of a list of clinical requirements to be included in a Ministry/PHSA [Request for Proposal \(RFP\)](#) for a digital solution(s) to support a “connected health system” in BC. The list reflected baseline needs that physicians had previously advised must be met and enabled by any digital solution enlisted to support system-wide interoperability of EMRs, clinical systems, and other digital health technologies being procured by the Ministry and PHSA.

How did we seek member input?

Targeted and all-member engagements

Various in-person and online opportunities for input over the past 5+ years, including support for physician participation at Ministry and PHSA workshops and Doctors of BC [Digital Health/EMR \(Phases 1 and 2\)](#) and [Primary Care](#) member engagements.

All-member engagement

Two interactive online webinars—hosted by the DTO and facilitated by physician leaders—to seek input on the clinical requirements list.

What did we ask?

We asked members to review and comment on a high-level clinical workflow for clinical service requests (e-Referrals, e-Consults, e-Orders (e.g., lab, diagnostic imaging), e-Forms) and advise on:



Whether the workflow met their clinical needs and, if not, what was needed/missing



Potential pitfalls to avoid in creating an end-user system

Who participated?

82
members

Type of practice

Family physician: 73%
Specialist: 27%

Practice setting

Community-based: 76%
Facility-based: 21%
Both: 3%

Geographic setting

Urban: 76%
Semi-urban: 7%
Rural: 17%

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Physicians confirmed they want a user-friendly connected health system.

Participant feedback centred around four main themes:

Patient experience

Many participants expressed interest in having a patient portal that allows for transparency in clinical service requests and for patients to effectively communicate with care providers, enabling them to:

- Accept, decline, or request modification to a referral request at any point in the process.
- Have some autonomy over their health care service decisions (e.g., preference of location, clinic, care provider, etc.).
- Provide patient-centered feedback.

Provider experience

Participants also noted the need to focus on general user experience and to:

- Enable providers to see the status of a clinical service request (e.g., when referral is accepted, triaged, declined, etc.).
- Enable patients and care providers to easily communicate.
- Provide support for education, training, and resources to ensure successful adoption of a connected health system.

- Engage physicians and seek their input throughout the entire development of a connected health system.

Administrative burden

- Create a streamlined process that is simple and easy to use, with fewer clicks.
- Provide funding for administrative work that is currently not being compensated for physicians and MOAs.
- Standardize the process for clinical service requests.
- Reduce the amount of communication between care providers.
- Better understand and address the emerging burdens associated with increased use of virtual care and its impact on care providers.

Features & functionalities

- Provide ability to easily update forms (e.g., patient status).
- Provide ability to choose referral specifications (e.g., location, provider, gender, etc.).
- Have mandatory features, including valid contact information for care providers, fields that auto-populate, automated/scheduled features, etc.

- Ensure data is collected, used, and disclosed with appropriate privacy and security safeguards.

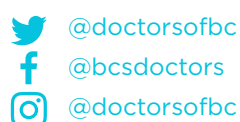
WHAT'S NEXT

Participants' input helped to finalize the clinical requirements included in the [Ministry/PHSA RFP \(posted online September 20, 2022\)](#). Pilot implementations are anticipated to start in spring 2023, once a successful vendor(s) has been secured.

Parallel work will continue on other components of the Ministry's plans for a connected health system. Doctors of BC will continue to advocate for your needs and opportunities for member input on all pieces of this provincial work.

For information on upcoming opportunities, contact digitalhealth@doctorsofbc.ca.

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