Canada Health Infoway
Inforoute Santé du Canada

eReferral Working Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Summary

Meeting Chair: Alex Reis			
Date and Time Wednesday, November 29, 2023,1:00pm - 2:00pm ET	**Location** Virtual	**Note Taker** Sadrina Petit, Project Analyst, Digital Health Interoperability	**Next Meeting Date** Thursday, December 14, 2023, 1:00pm – 2:00pm ET
Meeting Agenda: 1. eConsult Use Case & Workflow 2. FHIR CI Build updates 3. FHIR Resources Updates			
Presenters			
Mark Fernandes – eReferral / eConsult Product Owner Ifran Hakim - AI Strategy Consultant			
Invited Guests			
Public			

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1. **Welcome and Introductions**

   M. Fernandes welcomed all participants to the working group meeting. Meeting materials and recording of the session will be made available on the InfoCentral working group.

2. **Content Presentation**

   The Infoway team presented each item on the agenda. This meeting focused on discussing the eConsult Use Case & Workflow, FHIR CI Build updates, and FHIR Resources Updates, followed by a question-and-answer session. All the content covered during the presentation is available in the following links.

   The presentation is available: eReferral Working Group Meeting

   The video recording is available**:** eReferral Working Group Meeting

3. **Questions raised during the working group meeting:**

   eConsult Implementation and Workflow:

   Can eConsults be submitted without integration?

Yes, eConsults can be submitted without a fully integrated system. There are instances where the eConsult functionality is built into a standalone application or a POS system, allowing for submission without additional integration to an RMS.

Is eConsult functionality part of RMS or separate?

eConsult functionality can exist both as part of an RMS and as a separate entity. It can be integrated into a POS system, exist as a standalone system, or be part of the RMS, depending on the specific implementation.

How clear is the use case for new implementers?

The use case might require more clarity for new implementers, especially in distinguishing between different functionalities and specific scenarios. It's important to clearly define roles and processes in the use case documentation. The use case actors represented in the workflow diagram will be described in greater detail in the narrative. The technical interoperability specifications would provide detail around the transactions provided by the use case actor, and the conformance requirements for a use case actor, so it is clear to implementers how their system(s) can support a role in the overall workflow.

Why are certain outcomes listed as alternate flows?

Certain outcomes are listed as alternate flows to acknowledge different possible pathways the eConsult process can take. The 'happy path' is represented in the main workflow and the alternate flows represent the branching that can occur from the main workflow, and the outcomes that may result.

Where should the service discovery phase occur?

The service discovery phase can occur in both the RMS source and the POS systems. The phase is essential for identifying the correct destination and requirements for the eConsult request. Service discovery is supported by a Healthcare Service Directory (which can be defined as a generic component).

Who decides when an eConsult case is complete?

Generally, the requester (often the primary healthcare provider) decides when an eConsult case is complete, based on whether they have received the necessary information or advice from the specialist.

What are the different possible outcomes of an eConsult request?

The outcomes can include receiving advice only, being advised to refer the patient for a physical consultation, or a combination of advice and referral. Other outcomes include the specialist refusing the case if it's inappropriate or lacking in information.

Why is the consultation request in the eConsult process formulated before identifying the recipient, and would it be more beneficial to identify the recipient first?

The recommended approach is to identify the recipient before formulating the consultation request. This method, aligning with the eReferral request model ensures that the request contains information relevant to the identified specialist. The emphasis is on first finding the appropriate recipient to ensure effective communication and relevance of information shared. Unless there are specific constraints, this workflow should be uniformly applied.

Continuous Integration (CI) Guide and Implementation:

Can you provide details on the Continuous Integration guide and how it benefits the integration process?

The CI guide facilitates continuous and incremental changes from various jurisdictions and vendors, allowing for regular updates without the need for major releases. It includes a thorough review process involving gap analysis and feedback, enabling timely adaptations and better testing to meet evolving needs.

How does the CI process manage changes to ensure they don't necessitate refactoring for vendors?

The CI process includes validation checks to ensure updates are non-breaking, allowing the addition of new functionalities without disrupting existing implementations. Each update remains stable for a set period, providing consistency for vendors.

What is the management and release strategy for the CI guide, particularly for different jurisdictions?

Management and release strategies, including branch management per jurisdiction and release timelines, are currently under discussion. The process involves a backlog of requests from jurisdictions and vendors, with final decisions made by working group leads.

Why are certain constraints in the CI guide being relaxed, and what impact might this have on standardization?

Relaxing certain constraints aims to make the guide more flexible for various vendors. Ongoing discussions ensure these relaxations don’t compromise system integrity and interoperability, balancing flexibility with standardization.

How does the CI guide plan to handle provincial variations while maintaining overall harmonization?

The guide is likely to incorporate governance at the provincial or jurisdictional level to align specific changes with broader standards, aiming to balance uniformity with necessary regional differences.

How are changes in the CI process tracked and managed, particularly with regard to different branches?

Changes are managed using a backlog system to ensure traceability between requests and CI builds, providing transparency and accountability throughout the evolution of the guide.

Action Items

Action Item #	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date	Status
1	Schedule the next working group meeting for Thursday, December 14, 2023, 1:00pm – 2:00pm ET	Infoway	December 1, 2023	Completed
2	Schedule follow-up discussions as needed to address any additional questions or feedback from participants	Infoway	TBD	In Progress
3	Publish a FAQ to clarify the rationale for any proposed relaxations to profile constraints	Infoway	December 14, 2023	In Progress
4	Determine next steps and timeline for finalizing the initial set of profiles for the pan-Canadian eReferral guide	Infoway	TBD	In Progress
5	Follow up on the previously unanswered questions regarding the CI build approach	Infoway	December 13, 2023	In Progress
6	Share the deck on the proposed profile changes ahead of time so participants can review and come prepared with questions	Infoway	December 13, 2023	In Progress