

The Care Collaborative

PART OF COLORADO'S CONNECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

ANNUAL REPORT
2025



Anschutz

The Care Collaborative
Sharing knowledge. Improving health.

Welcome *A Shared Vision*

As we reflect on the past year, I am grateful to be part of The Care Collaborative alongside an incredible team and valued partners from across Colorado. This year marked a period of transition and sharpened our focus on strong relationships, shared purpose and a commitment to improving access to care. That foundation continues to guide how we move forward together.



In 2025, we celebrated an important milestone: ten years since the launch of our first ECHO series. This anniversary offered a chance to reflect on how far this work has come and the partnerships that made it possible. We also continued to expand our eConsults program to new rural and frontier locations, strengthening the connections between primary care and specialty care across the state.

The Care Collaborative has always been grounded in collaboration and strong relationships. Our work focuses on bringing together partnerships across CU Anschutz, diverse health systems, community clinics and organizations across the state. We work together towards the common goal of making specialty expertise more accessible. Our role is to connect people, share knowledge and help providers care for patients where they are.

In 2026, we remain focused on building on the strong foundation laid by those who helped shape The Care Collaborative into what it is today. Our commitment is to continue listening, learning and working alongside our partners to meet emerging needs and support a health system where care is connected and accessible across Colorado.

Thank you to our team and partners across the state whose collaboration and commitment continue to move this work forward.

Sincerely,

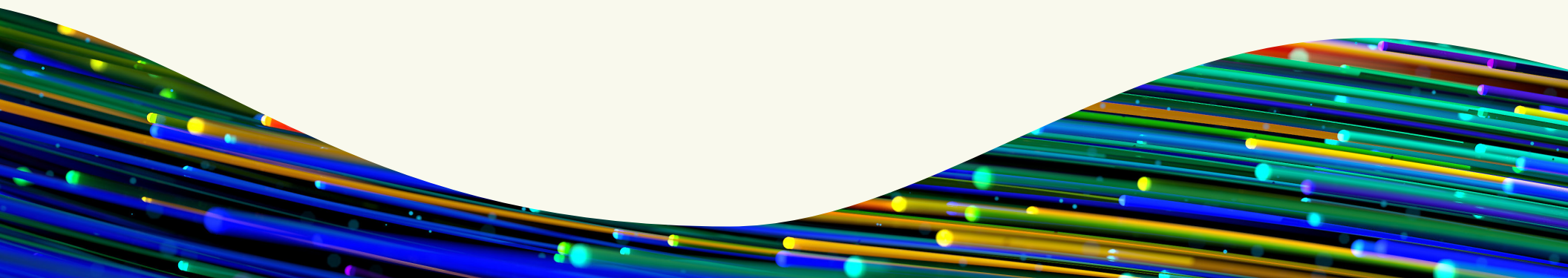

Devin Miller, DrPH

OUR BELIEF STATEMENT

At The Care Collaborative we believe frontline healthcare professionals deserve better access to specialized knowledge. So, every day we build connections across Colorado's medical community—linking people with knowledge to drive high-quality, timely care where it's needed most. Because when providers are informed and supported, Coloradans live healthier lives.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Connective Infrastructure

Across Colorado, care is happening everywhere, and so is the opportunity to connect expertise more effectively. While specialized knowledge is often rooted in large systems and urban centers, primary care teams, rural clinicians and public health partners are rising to meet increasingly complex needs every day. The expertise exists; the opportunity is to move it faster and more seamlessly to the people and communities who need it most.

Our mission is simple: make expertise accessible. We do this by intentionally linking the people, knowledge, data and systems that shape healthcare so that specialty insight reaches clinicians at the point of care. In practice, this means serving as connective infrastructure for the state's healthcare ecosystem.

We build relationships, workflows and shared tools that allow organizations to work together rather than in silos. We connect primary care providers with specialists, education with everyday practice, and data with decision-making. By aligning academic medicine, health systems, Medicaid, public health and community partners, we help knowledge flow quickly and reliably across settings.

When connection improves, care improves.

- Providers gain timely guidance and peer support
- Patients receive answers sooner and closer to home
- Health systems reduce unnecessary visits and delays
- Communities build lasting capacity instead of relying solely on distant resources

The result is measurable progress toward better outcomes, lower costs, stronger workforce satisfaction and improved access to care.

Collaboration has guided this work from the beginning. What started at CU Anschutz as a focused effort to share specialty knowledge has grown into a statewide network that supports clinicians and communities across Colorado. Today, The Care Collaborative is not a single program but a shared platform for partnership that brings together faculty, providers, state leaders and community organizations to solve problems collectively and scale what works.

This report includes stories of that work in action. You'll read about how our model connects expertise to care through integrated consultation and learning networks, how teams across campus and the state partner to address urgent needs, and how data and research guide continuous improvement. You'll also read about the people—clinicians, educators, students and campus leaders—who put our model to work every day.

Connective Infrastructure

The people, systems and processes that intentionally link expertise, data and relationships across organizations so knowledge can move to where it is needed most.

CHAPTER TWO

How Expertise Moves

The Care Collaborative is built on a simple premise: specialty expertise should be available where care is delivered. By moving knowledge—not patients—we help ensure care is more timely, connected and accessible across Colorado.

Two complementary tools power this approach: eConsults and ECHO.

eConsults integrate specialty guidance directly into clinical workflows

Through the electronic health record (EHR), clinicians can submit focused questions and receive patient-specific recommendations from specialists, often in less than two days. This reduces unnecessary referrals, shortens wait times, and supports more informed decision-making at the point of care. Over time, these exchanges also strengthen clinicians' ability to manage similar conditions independently.

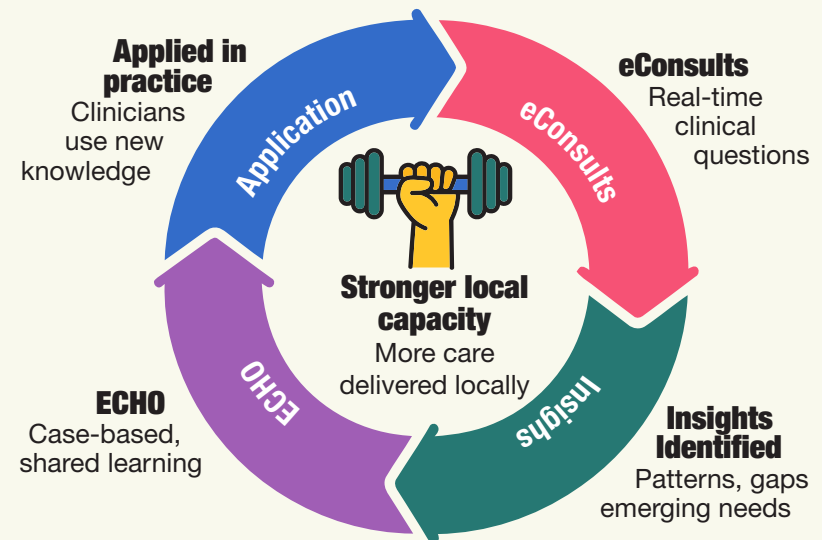
ECHO expands access to expertise through case-based, collaborative learning

Health professionals and specialists connect in virtual sessions to discuss real cases, share best practices and build practical skills. This model supports workforce development at scale, reduces professional isolation, and strengthens connections across care settings, particularly in rural and frontier communities.

Together, eConsults and ECHO form a coordinated system that supports both immediate care and long-term capacity building.

- eConsults provide real-time, patient-specific guidance
- ECHO builds knowledge and skills across communities
- Insights from eConsults inform ECHO learning priorities
- Clinicians apply new knowledge in practice, strengthening local care

This continuous learning cycle ensures that expertise is not only shared, but sustained, expanding access to high-quality care across the state.



**SEE WHAT'S
ECHOING NOW**
[CLICK HERE](#)

**READ ABOUT
eCONSULTS**
[CLICK HERE](#)

CHAPTER THREE

The Care Collaborative by the Numbers

eCONSULTS + ECHO 2025 TOTALS

2,945

unique participants engaged in 2025

Connecting health professionals, specialists and partners to help ensure that expertise moves efficiently to the point of care.

88%

work or reside in Colorado

48+

specialties covered

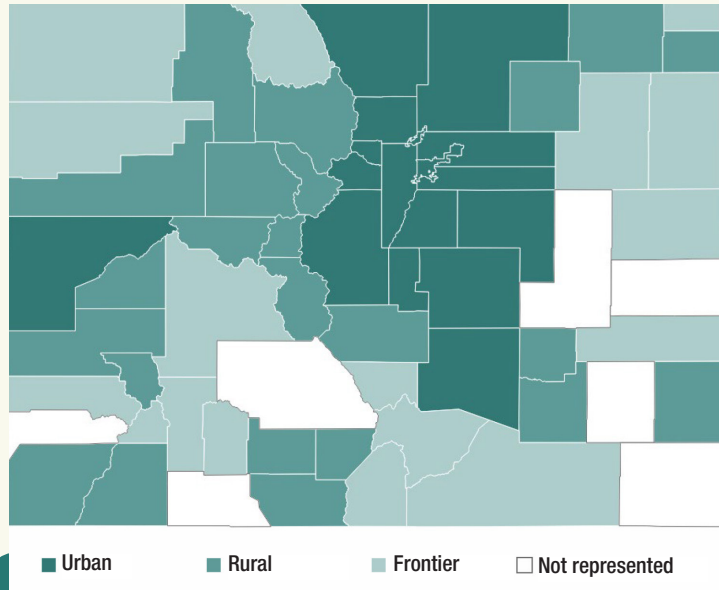
70%

work in primary care

81%

provide patient care

Expanding access to specialty expertise where it is needed most.



eCONSULTS + ECHO 2025 REACH

57 of 64

Colorado counties reached

Reaching health professionals and communities across urban, rural and frontier settings.

100%

urban counties

95%

rural counties

74%

frontier counties

Specialty expertise reaches nearly every region of Colorado.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Health professionals across Colorado—regardless of geography—are connected to timely specialty expertise. This reach is especially important in rural and frontier communities, where access gaps are greatest and local support can significantly improve care delivery.

WHAT THIS NETWORK SUPPORTS

- Real-time specialty guidance through eConsults
- Case-based learning through ECHO
- Stronger connections across care settings
- More care delivered locally

Engagement across networks in 2025

1,330+

providers submitted an eConsult

1,190+

participants attended an ECHO series

eConsults: Bringing Specialty Care to the Point of Care

Primary care providers receive timely, patient-specific guidance, reducing delays, avoiding unnecessary visits and keeping care local.

WHAT THIS ENABLES

- Patients get answers faster, often without travel
- Providers manage more care locally
- Health systems reduce unnecessary referrals
- Communities build long-term capacity

2025 TOTALS

8,261
eConsults
submitted

1.6 days
average eConsult
response time



In many cases, clinicians receive guidance within hours, helping avoid weeks or months of waiting.

564,665
travel miles saved
due to eConsults

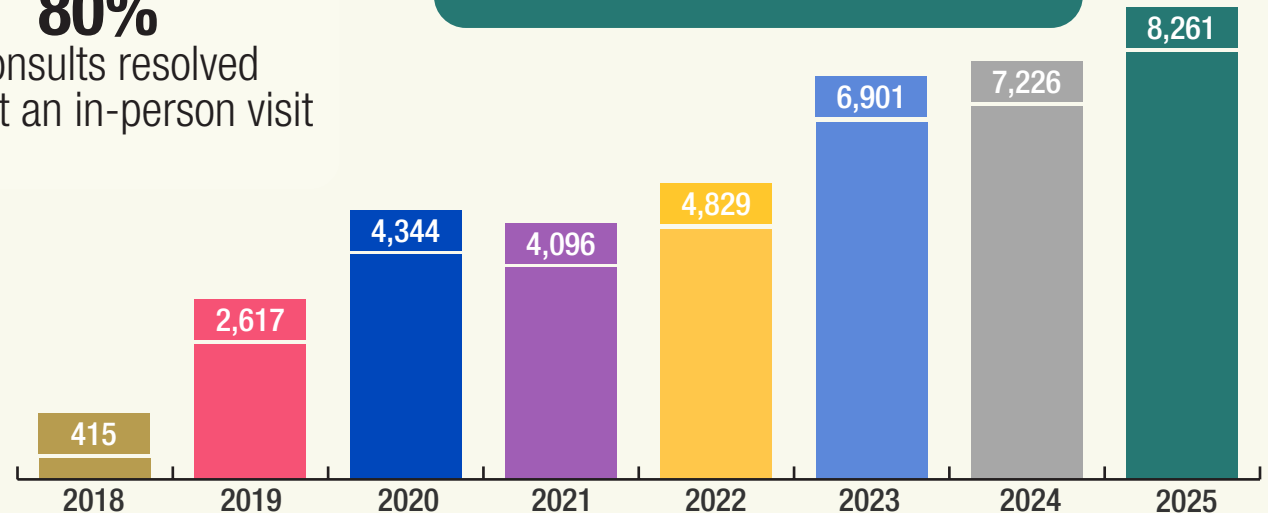
343
Colorado
eConsults clinics

1.35 years
travel time saved
through eConsults

80%
eConsults resolved
without an in-person visit

Rapid growth represents increased
reliance on eConsults statewide

eCONSULTS BY YEAR



ECHO: Expanding Expertise through Collaborative Learning

Virtual learning communities connect health professionals with specialists, building skills, confidence and community across Colorado and beyond.

2025 TOTALS

32

ECHO series

Programs that employ the ECHO model, with defined topics, learning objectives and target audience, to share best-practices.

3,479

Eligible CE hours

Participants can earn free continuing education (CE) credit by attending sessions and completing evaluation surveys.

212

ECHO sessions

Scheduled time when the series occurs, creating an interactive space where participants gain access to expert content.

36

Cohorts

Offering of a series within a timeframe when the same group of participants attends.



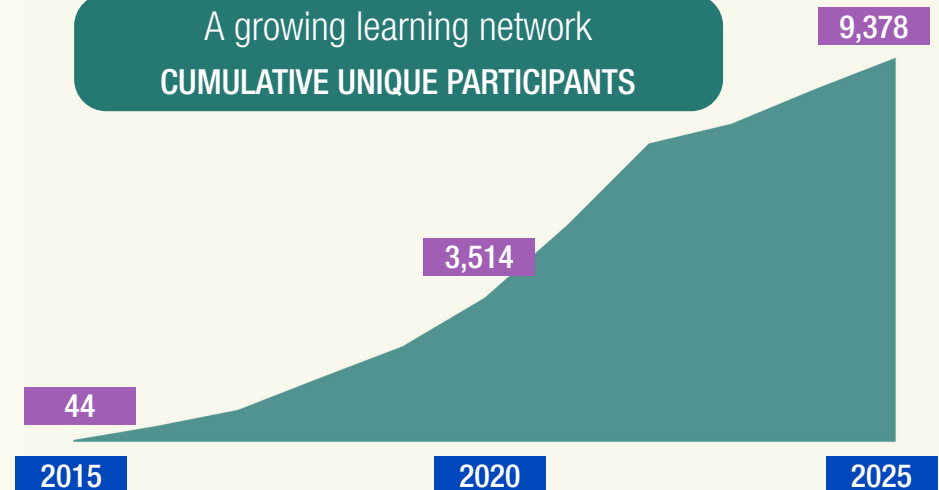
I feel much more confident in my care of endocrine disorders. My referrals to specialists are much more appropriate.

DO from Garfield County

9,300+

participants reached since 2015 launch

A growing learning network
CUMULATIVE UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS



eConsults + ECHO in Action

Leveraging eConsults and ECHO to Improve Specialty Care Access

eConsults and ECHO work together to expand access to specialty care by turning real-world clinical questions into targeted learning. Insights from more than 38,000 eConsults, specifically in endocrinology, neurology and rheumatology, have been used to shape ECHO curricula based on the most common challenges primary care providers face.

These ECHO series strengthen primary care providers' ability to manage specialty conditions and use eConsults effectively. Case-based learning reinforces practical application, helping reduce unnecessary in-person referrals while improving the quality of care delivered locally. ECHO sessions also create opportunities for providers to connect directly with the specialists who respond to their eConsults, building trust and encouraging ongoing use of the service.

Program evaluation data shows that participants report increased confidence, stronger self-efficacy and greater intention to apply best practices in both specialty care management and eConsult utilization. Integrating eConsult data into ECHO also supports ongoing assessment of clinical performance and patient outcomes, ensuring that expertise is not only shared, but sustained through a continuous learning loop.

In 2025, this approach helped identify emerging educational needs in areas such as palliative care, psychiatry and Long COVID, guiding the development of new and expanded specialty programs.

PARTICIPANT-REPORTED CHANGES



CONFIDENCE



SELF-EFFICACY



BEST PRACTICES

SPECIALTY CARE ECHO PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHTS 2023-2025

248
total
participants

87%
Colorado
participants

79%
Medicaid
providers

The program did a nice job looking at common primary care neurological conditions and helped me learn how to break it down and start the work while I am waiting for a neurologist consult and when I need to push for an immediate appointment.

PA from Jefferson County

CHAPTER FOUR

The People Powering the Model

Connection doesn't happen automatically. It requires people, process and infrastructure. The Care Collaborative brings together clinicians, educators, instructional designers, researchers, evaluators and program managers who work side by side to translate expertise into accessible care. From developing curricula to analyzing outcomes data to supporting partners across the state, the team ensures programs are not only launched, but sustained, improved and scaled.

Clinical and Subject Matter Experts

Faculty clinicians and program leaders provide field-tested expertise that informs all content.

Instructional Design

Learning specialists partner with clinicians to transform complex knowledge into engaging, accessible, practice-ready education for diverse care settings.

Evaluation

Evaluation experts design and implement outcomes measurement, quality improvement and impact reporting to ensure programs are effective and accountable.

Research

Applied researchers advance evidence-based models, support dissemination, and contribute to the broader field of healthcare delivery and education.

Marketing and Outreach

Our marketing and engagement specialists support recruitment, partner engagement and dissemination to ensure programs reach providers statewide and beyond.

Program Management

Program managers provide the infrastructure that enables consistency, scalability and sustainability across initiatives.

Operational Leadership

Operational leaders provide the strategic infrastructure that allows The Care Collaborative to function effectively at scale by overseeing financial management, contracts, compliance, staffing structure and systems integration.



The Care Collaborative Team, Aurora, Colorado

September 2025

SPOTLIGHT

Kyle Leggott, MD, Primary Care Liaison

Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine
Scholar, Farley Health Policy Center
Board of Directors, CAFP



As The Care Collaborative's Primary Care Liaison, Dr. Kyle Leggott sits at the intersection of campus expertise and community care. A family doctor serving the Denver metro area, his role is to ensure that ECHO's educational offerings reflect the real-world needs of primary care providers while strengthening partnerships with state agencies such as the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Department of Corrections. From leading series on Long COVID to coordinating public health updates and peer education, Kyle helps translate emerging knowledge into practical tools providers can use right away.

But for Kyle, the work is about more than education, it's about connection. By building peer-to-peer learning networks across Colorado, the ECHO program helps providers manage complex cases locally, reducing unnecessary travel and keeping patients in their communities. "We're not just sharing information," he says. "We're building collaborative networks across the state. It's a two-way street—providers learn from specialists, and state partners hear directly from the front lines of care."

Kyle first experienced ECHO as a medical student and saw how multi-disciplinary case discussions improved outcomes and strengthened primary care teams. That experience shaped his path to his unique role at The Care Collaborative. Today, he helps sustain the same connective infrastructure that proved critical during the COVID-19 response, when ECHO rapidly disseminated evolving public health guidance statewide. "I jumped at the chance to be part of a program that makes this kind of impact," he says.

Through leaders like Kyle, The Care Collaborative continues to make expertise accessible, ensuring that no matter where care is delivered, providers are supported and patients benefit.

We're building collaborative networks across the state. It's a two-way street—providers learn from specialists, and state partners hear directly from the front lines of care.

A Network of Clinical and Community Partners

The Care Collaborative's model is powered by a statewide network of faculty, healthcare champions and strategic partners who, by co-designing and leading our efforts, continuously strengthen Colorado's specialty access infrastructure. Our model is effective thanks to shared leadership between ECHO faculty and eConsults champions, who partner as co-creators of our connective infrastructure.

Faculty and community partners provide clinical leadership, shape priority topic areas and guide high-value curriculum that aligns with health system and community needs. Health system and clinical leaders drive adoption, optimize workflows, and embed these models into routine care delivery to improve access and efficiency.

We continually invite clinicians, health systems and partners to join this network, whether by leading, piloting, advising or scaling new models of virtual specialty support across the state.



SPOTLIGHT

Steven Taylor, MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine,
Division of Rheumatology
LInQS Fellow | Clinical Systems Innovator



When Steven Taylor, MD, looks at a referral list, he doesn't just see appointments waiting to be scheduled, he sees opportunities to redesign how care is delivered.

As an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Section Head for General Rheumatology, Steven leads the division's non-academic clinical enterprise while also serving as Medical Director of the UCHealth Central Park Infusion Center. But it's his role as a Leaders in Informatics, Quality and Systems (LInQS) Fellow—supported by The Care Collaborative—that has allowed him to step back and ask a bigger question: How can we connect patients to specialty expertise faster and more effectively?

The two-year LInQS fellowship trains physicians to become leaders in clinical systems design, informatics and patient safety. For Steven, that training became a platform for tackling one of rheumatology's biggest challenges: access. Demand for specialty care far outpaces supply, and long wait times can delay answers for patients and primary care providers alike.

With mentorship and partnership from The Care Collaborative, Steven analyzed referral patterns and identified a common issue: many positive ANA lab results were being sent for in-person specialty visits, even though most did not ultimately lead to a rheumatologic diagnosis. Instead of adding to already long waitlists, he developed a simple clinical decision support tool that guides referring providers to start with an eConsult.

The impact was immediate and measurable. eConsult use for positive ANA questions increased fivefold—from 4 to 20 percent—and the median time to receive specialist guidance dropped from 31 days to 13. The approach has now been implemented across the UCHealth system, improving timely access to expertise for patients.

That work also helped launch the Rheumatology Access and Care Innovation Center (RA-CIC), which houses the division's eConsult and ECHO programs, further expanding ways to connect primary care teams with specialty knowledge.

Steven first connected with The Care Collaborative when he took over his division's ECHO program. He quickly saw alignment between the organization's mission and his own: linking expertise across large systems and making it accessible at the point of care.

“My favorite part of this work,” he says, “has been having the time and support to think deeply about how we better connect referring providers and specialists in an increasingly fragmented system, and then actually build those solutions.”

Through innovation, collaboration and a system-level mindset, Steven is helping ensure that specialty care reaches patients when and where it matters most.

My favorite part of this work has been having the time and support to think deeply about how we better connect referring providers and specialists in an increasingly fragmented system, and then actually build those solutions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Campus as Catalyst

For The Care Collaborative, the starting point for our work is CU Anschutz, a place where clinical care, education and research come together every day. The campus is where our ideas can be tested quickly, partnerships form naturally across disciplines and solutions move rapidly from concept to implementation.

The Care Collaborative is an example of CU Anschutz strategic priorities in action. Our programs bridge schools on campus, strengthen community partnerships, expand the state's telehealth infrastructure, train the workforce and use data collaboratively to drive improvement.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

eConsults: Making Specialty Care Accessible

The CU Anschutz School of Medicine launched the eConsults program in 2018, modeled after the Association of American Medical Colleges' Project CORE initiative. Fully integrated into the electronic health record, eConsults enable primary care providers across internal and external health systems to quickly seek guidance from specialists using more than 115 structured templates that have connected them to over 471 specialists across 24 clinical areas.

The eConsults program continues to grow, expanding both the number of specialties and the clinical situations where timely expertise can make the greatest difference. This year, new templates were introduced in hematology and pulmonology. In hematology, templates for managing monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) are improving pathways to earlier evaluation and treatment. In pulmonology, a new Long COVID template—the development supported by a \$400,000 federal grant—helps clinicians address complex, often under-recognized symptoms and connect patients to appropriate care more quickly.

These additions build on the core promise of eConsults: delivering specialist insight in days rather than months. For many patients, this means faster answers and fewer unnecessary visits. One recent case illustrates this impact. A primary care provider was managing a patient with chronic blood clots and seizures whose medications created dangerous drug interactions after a new injury. A change in treatment triggered severe mood symptoms, but the patient faced a months-long wait to see neurology. Using an eConsult, the PCP received specialist guidance within hours, including a clear, four-week management plan. The rapid intervention stabilized the patient's symptoms, reduced his anxiety score to zero, and helped him avoid disruptions to his work and daily life, weeks before his scheduled in-person appointment.

By embedding specialty expertise directly into everyday primary care workflows, eConsults removes traditional access barriers and ensures patients receive the right care at the right time.



Expanding Access to Adolescent Reproductive Health Expertise

The Adolescent Reproductive Health ECHO program ([ARH-ECHO](#)) was initiated by The Care Collaborative and the School of Medicine's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 2019. With six years of support from The Buell Foundation, the program has grown into a multi-faceted effort to deliver expert-developed content on reproductive and sexual health to diverse provider audiences. What began as a single ECHO for pediatric primary care providers has expanded to reach nurses, educators, and professionals working with young people and their families across care and community settings.

Through a model that combines collaborative learning, on-demand training and individualized support, ARH-ECHO makes specialized expertise accessible to those on the front lines of adolescent care, equipping them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to address complex clinical challenges.

At the heart of the program is a multidisciplinary [Community of Practice](#), an ECHO series that brings together participants from across healthcare and education to explore emerging research, share best practices, and problem-solve real-world challenges.

Complementing this peer learning environment are intensive six-hour training series tailored for primary care providers, nurses and educators, available in both synchronous and asynchronous formats to increase flexibility and reach. While live sessions paused in 2025, updated and expanded online courses, featuring interactive activities, inclusive practices and practical tools, will relaunch in 2026.

Ongoing engagement is sustained through monthly clinical pearl emails and an online resource hub, ensuring participants have timely guidance and access to a trusted network of support. In 2025, the resource hub saw more than 1,500 visitors, and over 800 providers received clinical pearls each month.

Together, these offerings create a connected learning community that advances reproductive justice and improves access to adolescent-friendly, person-centered care.

ABOUT ARH-ECHO 2019-2025

22
multi-week
cohorts

190
sessions

662
participants

37%
participants from
non-metro
Denver

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Expanding Specialty Access Through Midwifery-OB eConsults

In 2025, the CU Anschutz School of Medicine's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology partnered with The Care Collaborative to launch a new eConsult pathway connecting CU Anschutz School of Nursing midwives with OB-GYN specialists. The School of Nursing, which is nationally recognized for preparing advanced practice nurses who deliver frontline, community-based maternal care, serves patients across diverse clinical settings, many of whom benefit from timely access to specialty expertise. Together, the teams co-designed an eConsult workflow that embeds specialist guidance directly into midwives' everyday practice.

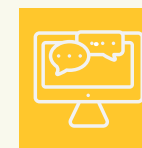
This collaboration marked two important milestones for eConsults: the first formal engagement with the School of Nursing and the first specialist-to-specialist eConsult pathway. By enabling midwives to consult directly with OB-GYN experts, the model strengthens clinical decision-making, supports scope-of-practice confidence, and reduces unnecessary referrals and delays.

The initiative quickly proved its value and now serves as a pilot for expanding similar cross-specialty collaborations. Since August 2025, midwives have submitted nearly 40 eConsults across four specialties, with approximately 75 percent resulting in actionable guidance that could be implemented immediately, helping patients receive timely care without additional visits and ensuring expertise reaches them where care is delivered.



4

OB/GYN specialties



40

eConsults submitted in 2025



75%

saved an in-person visit

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COLORADO

Reducing Wait Times, Advancing Early Identification of Autism

Across the country, families seeking an autism evaluation often wait months—sometimes years—for specialty care. Rising prevalence (now 1 in 31 children), a limited diagnostic workforce and geographic barriers in rural and underserved communities have created significant gaps in access. Yet we know that early identification and intervention lead to better lifelong outcomes.

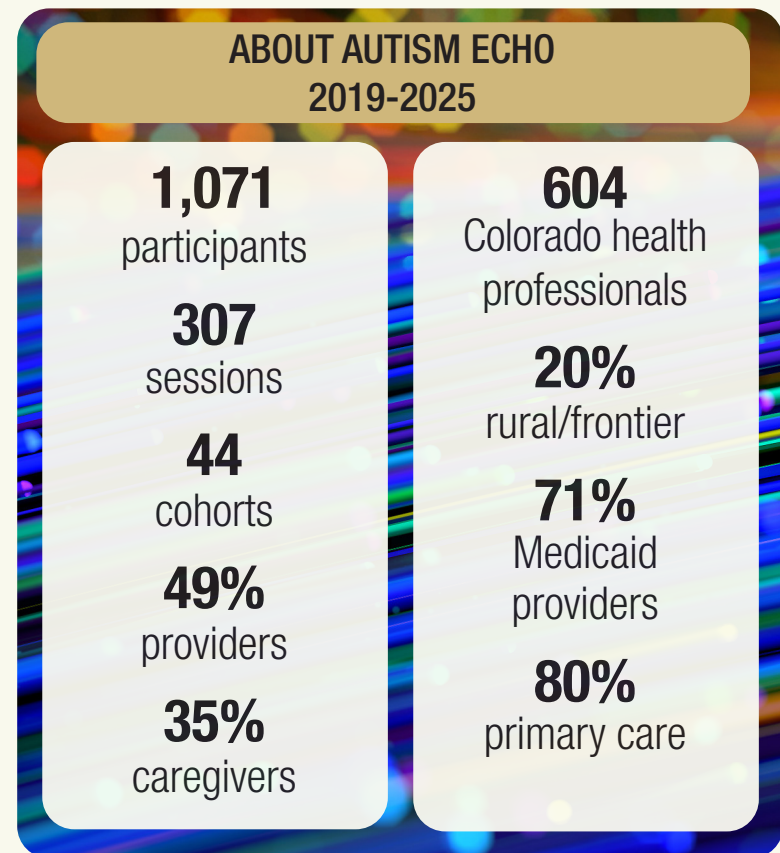
To address this challenge, The Care Collaborative partnered with Children's Hospital Colorado (CHCO) to launch the Autism ECHO program in 2019. Together, we are building local capacity so children can receive timely care closer to home by equipping primary care and community providers with the skills and confidence to screen, diagnose and manage autism.

Our newest series, Diagnosing Autism in Primary Care, launched in 2025 to address a common barrier: provider confidence. Through case-based learning alongside CHCO specialists, participants work through real-world scenarios, gain practical tools, and receive the reassurance to trust their clinical judgment and act sooner. The program also tackles workflow, time and billing challenges, offering realistic solutions and a supportive peer community that is especially valuable for rural clinicians who may practice in professional isolation.

Recognizing that autism support extends beyond clinical settings, the autism ECHO program expanded to reach educators and early intervention teams. Family Engagement Strategies for Early Autism Intervention equips school nurses, teachers, therapists and behavioral health professionals with evidence-based approaches from Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions (NDBI), strengthening family-centered care in everyday environments.

Additional offerings, including Autism: Core Concepts for Primary Care Part 1 and Part 2, a monthly Autism Case Conference, an advanced consultation series, and Navigate the Wait, an ECHO series for families awaiting evaluation, create a comprehensive learning ecosystem that supports both providers and caregivers across the continuum of care.

Together, ECHO and CHCO are reducing wait times, strengthening local expertise and advancing equitable access to autism care so every child, regardless of geography, has the opportunity to be identified early and supported close to home.



CHAPTER SIX

Expanding Access Across Colorado

eConsults and ECHO are tools employed by the State to meet shared goals around value-based care, healthcare access for rural and frontier Coloradans, reduced travel burden and patient costs, and provider capacity. A state goal also includes reducing avoidable referrals, ED visits and wait times—issues addressed by the power of collaborating to share medical knowledge.

eConsults Community of Practice: Aligning Partners to Expand Specialty Access

In December 2024, The Care Collaborative launched the eConsults Community of Practice (CoP), a flagship example of statewide collaboration designed to strengthen and scale access to specialty care across Colorado. The CoP brings together clinical and health system leaders to share best practices, review utilization and outcomes data, and align strategies that accelerate adoption of eConsults.

Seven organizations currently participate, including [Kaiser Permanente](#), the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF), [Denver Health](#), [Children’s Hospital Colorado](#), [Rocky Mountain Health Plans](#), [National Jewish Health](#) and [CU Anschutz](#)—representing diverse care settings and perspectives. Meeting every other month, the group convened its seventh session in January 2026.

Discussions have focused on practical solutions to improve implementation and experience for both providers and patients, including education resources, patient consent processes, shared terminology, and platform updates such as adding new specialties and expanding into additional clinics. By creating

a consistent space for learning and problem-solving, the CoP reduces duplication of effort and helps partners move forward together rather than in silos.

In 2026, the Community of Practice will prioritize outreach to rural and frontier counties to broaden access to eConsults, expand training and education materials, and share survey results and data to identify opportunities for statewide alignment. Participants consistently note the value of hearing how others approach similar challenges and discovering new opportunities to collaborate.

By convening this network, The Care Collaborative is helping health systems learn from one another, strengthen engagement, and ensure more Coloradans can access specialty expertise no matter where they live.

Strengthening Colorado’s Rural Healthcare Workforce

Rural and frontier healthcare organizations face growing challenges, including long distances to specialty care, workforce shortages, rising costs, clinician burnout and limited local resources. The Care Collaborative helps close these gaps, linking hospitals and clinics with the expertise, partnerships and systems that expand capacity without adding overhead. Through coordinated networks of learning and consultation, we help teams manage complex care locally, strengthen retention and deliver timely, high-quality care locally.

SPOTLIGHT

Lindsey Harr, PA-C, Rural Clinician

When Lindsey Harr, PA-C, joined the Adolescent Reproductive Health in Primary Care ECHO (ARH-ECHO) in early 2020, she didn't know how essential virtual specialty support would soon become. Within weeks, COVID-19 upended care delivery and Lindsey was among hundreds of providers who turned to the three-times-weekly COVID-19 Just-in-Time ECHO for timely, trusted guidance.

Five years later, Lindsey, a family medicine physician assistant in Craig, Colorado, has participated in 13 different ECHO programs, using them as an ongoing source of learning and connection to specialists to whom she otherwise wouldn't have access.

Craig, a town of 9,000 in Moffat County, is considered frontier, and Memorial Regional Health is a critical lifeline for care in this remote corner of the state. Like many rural clinicians, Lindsey has limited local specialty resources and patients often face long wait times for appointments. Through ECHO, she can consult with specialists, strengthen her clinical skills, and begin appropriate care right away while patients await referrals.

Over the years, Lindsey has joined sessions in rheumatology, pediatric psychiatry, urology, endocrinology, breastfeeding medicine and adolescent reproductive health, expanding the breadth of care she can confidently provide in her community.

Reaching providers like Lindsey is central to our mission. In partnership with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing, The Care Collaborative is working to increase engagement among rural and frontier clinicians, who currently represent 16 percent of participants. Together, the organizations are strengthening outreach strategies and using data to identify gaps and ensure expertise reaches the communities that need it most.

For Lindsey, the impact is personal. She chose a career as a physician assistant to serve people with limited access to care, especially women and families in rural communities. Resources like ARH Clinical Pearls, part of the ARH-ECHO program, provide practical, evidence-based updates she applies in her practice on a regular basis.

"ECHO is a wonderful platform to reach healthcare providers who are eager to grow their knowledge to better serve their patients," Lindsey says. "I recommend it to every student and colleague I work with."



ECHO is a wonderful platform to reach healthcare providers who are eager to grow their knowledge to better serve their patients.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Strengthening Public Health Systems

At The Care Collaborative we believe everyone has a shared responsibility for population health. Our programs promote public health by creating cross-sector collaboration where clinical care meets public health and corrections systems. We continually partner with public health organizations because our programs support statewide public health infrastructure and address social determinants of health in cultural contexts.

The Care Collaborative and CDPHE: Supporting Public Health Statewide with ECHO Colorado

Public health is constantly evolving, requiring rapid responses to emerging threats, continuous workforce training, and strong partnerships that connect academia, government and community practice. ECHO Colorado provides scalable, real-time public health education, an approach that shares knowledge efficiently to keep up with evolving public health needs.

Colorado's recent syphilis epidemic underscores the need for rapid public health responses. From 2018 to 2023, syphilis cases in the state tripled, while congenital syphilis saw a seven-fold increase. In April 2024, Governor Polis declared a public health emergency, prompting the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) to lead a collaborative effort to curb transmission. As part of this response, CDPHE partnered with ECHO Colorado to launch *Syphilis in Colorado: A Call to Action*, a four-week ECHO series focused on improving screening, identification and treatment statewide. Through this innovative learning model, 170 frontline professionals engaged in real-time, case-based learning with experts. After the series, 77 percent of respondents reported feeling very confident to extremely confident in their ability to test for syphilis, compared to just 55 percent who felt the same way before the series.

The syphilis response is just one example of how ECHO Colorado and CDPHE have partnered to tackle urgent public health challenges. Over the years, ECHO Colorado has played a pivotal role in the development, implementation and analysis of several public health-related ECHO series related to COVID-19, childhood lead poisoning prevention, breastfeeding and cancer survivor care navigation. ECHO and CDPHE are now offering the third cohort of *Colorado Updates in Public Health*, a monthly series providing real-time updates on emerging issues, policy changes and best practices for clinical and public health professionals across the state.

For public health leaders, foundations and policymakers, ECHO Colorado represents a scalable, data-driven model for workforce development, community engagement and rapid knowledge dissemination. As funding priorities shift toward innovative, systems-based approaches, ECHO Colorado provides an evidence-based framework that can be leveraged for statewide public health initiatives.

Building the Next Generation of Public Health Leaders with CSPH

At The Care Collaborative, expertise doesn't just travel across networks of clinicians, it also grows from within. A longstanding partnership with the Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) ensures that the next generation of public health leaders is learning by doing, contributing directly to stronger systems of care across Colorado.

In 2025, The Care Collaborative employed nine graduate and undergraduate students, including five from CSPH, creating hands-on opportunities for students to engage in real-world program implementation, evaluation and policy translation. Projects have included qualitative research, scoping reviews, FQHC data analysis and program support. These experiences move learning beyond the classroom and into the communities where care is delivered, strengthening both the public health workforce and the state's public health infrastructure.

In addition to supporting students, The Care Collaborative's own team contributes to this culture of expertise. Currently, seven staff members hold degrees from CSPH—six hold Master of Public Health (MPH) degrees and one is a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)—bringing advanced public health training directly into program design, evaluation and policy initiatives. Their academic grounding strengthens the organization's capacity to translate research into practice and reinforces our commitment to building a skilled, locally-rooted public health workforce.



In class, we talk about health disparities and health equity in theory. Working at The Care Collaborative, I get to see what it actually looks like to close those gaps.

SPOTLIGHT

Agnes Eldo, Student Assistant



For Agnes Eldo, a current CSPH student supporting the Colorado Updates in Public Health ECHO series and other programs, the role has transformed how she understands public health in action.

“In class, we talk about health disparities and health equity in theory,” she says. “Working at The Care

Collaborative, I get to see what it actually looks like to close those gaps. When we equip healthcare professionals with the right knowledge and support, it changes the decisions they make and the care they provide. That impact reaches entire communities.”

Through ECHO programs, Agnes helps connect public health and clinical professionals with timely expertise, creating a ripple effect of shared knowledge that improves care beyond any single organization. The experience has given her a broader perspective on how collaboration functions as connective infrastructure that links education, practice and policy to create measurable change.

Her motivation for pursuing public health is deeply rooted in equity. “I want to play an active role in addressing health disparities and improving representation of underrepresented communities in research,” she says. “Using data and evidence-based approaches to promote more equitable outcomes feels like the most meaningful way to make a difference.”

Stories like Agnes's reflect the heart of The Care Collaborative's partnership with CSPH: preparing skilled leaders while simultaneously strengthening systems today. By investing in students and emerging professionals, The Care Collaborative ensures that expertise continues to flow, improving access, building provider capacity and advancing more equitable health outcomes for Colorado and beyond.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Stories from the Field

The following stories show what collaboration looks like in practice. By aligning federal, state and local partners, The Care Collaborative turns shared expertise into practical solutions that expand access, strengthen local capacity and improve health where it's needed most. From connecting rural clinics to specialty care through eConsults to empowering peer health leaders inside correctional facilities, these initiatives demonstrate how partnership transforms barriers into pathways for better care.

Peer Education Program: Building Health Leaders from Within

In 2025, The Care Collaborative launched a new approach to health education inside Colorado's correctional facilities, putting knowledge directly into the hands of those best positioned to share it.

Through a partnership with the Colorado Department of Corrections, the Peer Education Program (PEP) trains incarcerated individuals to serve as peer health educators, building the skills, confidence and health literacy needed to support chronic disease management, reduce the spread of communicable illnesses and prepare for successful reentry.

The program, inspired by a model in New Mexico and adapted for Colorado over three years of planning, launched in December 2025 at the Centennial Correctional Facility in Cañon City. Eight peer specialists completed an intensive 40-hour training led by The Care Collaborative and partners, covering topics such as Hepatitis C, sexually transmitted infections, harm reduction and public health fundamentals.

Through presentations, skits and team-based learning, participants developed the skills to both understand and teach the material. By the end of the training, they had transitioned from learners to leaders, prepared to serve as trusted sources of health information within their facilities.

By combining peer leadership with evidence-based training, the program aims to strengthen health literacy, reduce communicable disease and foster a culture of support. This first cohort represents an important step toward expanding community-driven health solutions in correctional settings and beyond.



PEP Team, Cañon City, Colorado

December 2025



Federal, State and Local Partners Align to Expand Rural Access through eConsults

In 2025, a \$403,000 Congressional appropriation secured by Rep. Jason Crow expanded specialty care access to four rural health centers in the San Luis Valley region through the launch of the rural eConsults program. The initiative reduces disparities in specialty access by expanding timely specialty care, improving care coordination and advancing health equity for rural patients.

Through this expansion, the program connected 21,000 rural patients and 12 primary care providers to specialty expertise in nearly 20 different specialty areas, saving patients in areas like Mineral and Rio Grande counties up to five hours of travel time.

With 82 percent of Colorado counties classified as rural, many residents face transportation, economic and geographic barriers to care. eConsults deliver faster care recommendations and strengthen providers' capacity to manage care locally. eConsults support high-quality, lower-cost treatment while keeping patients in their primary medical home.

In 2026, we will strengthen clinic partnerships and onboard approximately 12 additional rural clinics to continue increasing timely, equitable access to specialty care across Colorado.

The Care Collaborative Part of Statewide Response to Long COVID

Long COVID continues to present complex, evolving challenges for patients and the primary care teams who support them. In partnership with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Colorado Multidisciplinary Translation Network (CO-MTN) and the UHealth Long COVID Multidisciplinary Clinic, The Care Collaborative is strengthening Colorado's statewide response by equipping clinicians with timely expertise through both ECHO and eConsults.

In 2025, ECHO launched a tiered Long COVID education model for providers across the CO-MTN primary care network, combining:

- a six-module, self-paced course introducing foundational concepts
- a six-session live series focused on advanced clinical application
- an ongoing Community of Practice supporting peer learning through case discussion and shared best practices

Designed with multidisciplinary experts and individuals with lived experience, the curriculum emphasizes practical strategies that can be applied across diverse clinical settings. The self-paced course and live series are currently open to providers at 17 clinics, with the Community of Practice launching in 2026.

To complement ECHO training, eConsults connect primary care clinicians directly with Long COVID specialists at CU Anschutz. This asynchronous model enables providers to receive timely, patient-specific guidance for complex cases, supported by a structured template that streamlines workflows and improves efficiency.

Together, Long COVID ECHOs and eConsults are reaching 30 Colorado primary care clinics, with recruitment continuing to expand access to five additional clinics in 2026. The Care Collaborative also participates in Colorado's state-led Long COVID Community of Practice, bringing together providers, policymakers, public health leaders and patient advocates to accelerate improvements in care. By integrating education, consultation and community, The Care Collaborative is strengthening Colorado's ability to respond to Long COVID while building a more resilient system for the future.





Celebrating the Career and Impact of Dr. John F. “Fred” Thomas



As we reflect on the past year, we also recognize an important transition for The Care Collaborative and our broader community. In 2025, John F. “Fred”

Thomas, PhD, MSSW, Executive Director of

The Care Collaborative, retired following 13 years of leadership in Colorado and more than 25 years advancing telehealth nationally. His work has shaped and expanded Colorado’s approach to telehealth, care access and system connection.

Dr. Thomas joined University of Colorado Anschutz with a background in healthcare advancement and community-based systems of care. Building on more than a decade of leadership at the University of Texas Medical Branch, where he developed a nationally-recognized pediatric telehealth model, he brought both experience and a clear sense of purpose to Colorado: strengthening access to care by connecting people, knowledge and systems in new ways.

During his time in Colorado, Dr. Thomas played a central role in launching and expanding ECHO Colorado with a strong dedication to community engagement and partnership. He consistently looked outward by working alongside communities to understand their needs and co-create innovative solutions to access challenges. Under his leadership, ECHO Colorado grew into a trusted model for connecting specialists with primary care providers, behavioral health professionals and community-based organizations across all communities. This work helped move expertise beyond traditional academic settings and into the communities where it is needed most.

Dr. Thomas also led the advancement of the eConsults program by guiding implementation efforts and securing funding to support new models of care delivery. His leadership expanded eConsults into rural and frontier counties, strengthened connections between primary and specialty care, and improved timeliness and coordination for patients. This work positioned Colorado as a leader in provider-to-provider telehealth and expanded the potential for scalable, sustainable models of care access.

Dr. Thomas’s legacy is reflected not only in program growth but in the connective infrastructure that now supports ongoing collaboration, innovation and access to care across the state. We are grateful for his leadership, his vision and his enduring contributions. We extend our sincere thanks to him for his lasting impact on The Care Collaborative and the surrounding community.

Thank you Fred!

The Care Collaborative Team

CHAPTER NINE

Learning through Research

At The Care Collaborative, research drives how we learn, adapt and lead. We study how technology-enabled collaboration improves care delivery, generating evidence that strengthens communication, aligns systems and expands access to high-quality care. By identifying patterns in risk, treatment and care gaps, we inform policy and practice, helping ensure patients receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Optimizing care delivery and experience

We examine how electronic consultations and other asynchronous models reshape the specialty care journey, from referral pathways and wait times to coordination across teams. Our work identifies what helps or hinders both provider efficiency and patient convenience, ensuring these innovations integrate seamlessly into clinical workflows while improving continuity and satisfaction.

Improving clinical outcomes

We evaluate how virtual, collaborative care can enhance the quality and safety of prevention, diagnosis and treatment. By benchmarking electronic models against traditional in-person care, we ensure that new approaches deliver outcomes that are not only comparable, but evidence-based, reliable and safe.

Driving value and advancing equity

We analyze the economic and access impact of care redesign. Our research quantifies how asynchronous models reduce travel burdens, lower out-of-pocket costs and decrease missed appointments, while extending specialty expertise to rural and frontier communities. The result is the smarter use of resources and more equitable access for all patients.

AT THE CARE COLLABORATIVE WE ARE...

Leading the way

Current research initiatives are helping us define how the field measures value—from clinical efficiency and cost savings to environmental impact.

Redefining the care experience

Our original research shows that 72 percent of endocrinology eConsults avoided a clinic visit within one year, freeing nearly 3,000 appointments for patients with complex needs. At the same time, clinical outcomes matched those achieved through traditional in-person care.

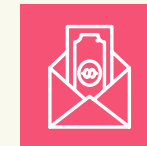
Caring for the planet

Because of the CU Anschutz eConsults program, patients have saved approximately 43,000 hours of travel time and nearly \$400,000 in out-of-pocket expenses, while preventing an estimated 800 tons of carbon emissions and reducing our environmental footprint.



43,000
hours

travel time saved



\$400,000

out-of-pocket
costs avoided



800
tons

carbon emissions
avoided

Illuminating care patterns

Our analyses reveal how referral behaviors evolve as eConsult programs scale, highlighting opportunities to prioritize high-impact use cases and better support providers. These insights ensure our digital models truly serve the clinicians and communities who rely on them.

Listening and innovating

Provider feedback directly shapes our improvements. By integrating AI-enabled tools into the eConsults process, we aim to streamline communication, reduce administrative burden and create more time for patient care, while generating new knowledge to advance the field.

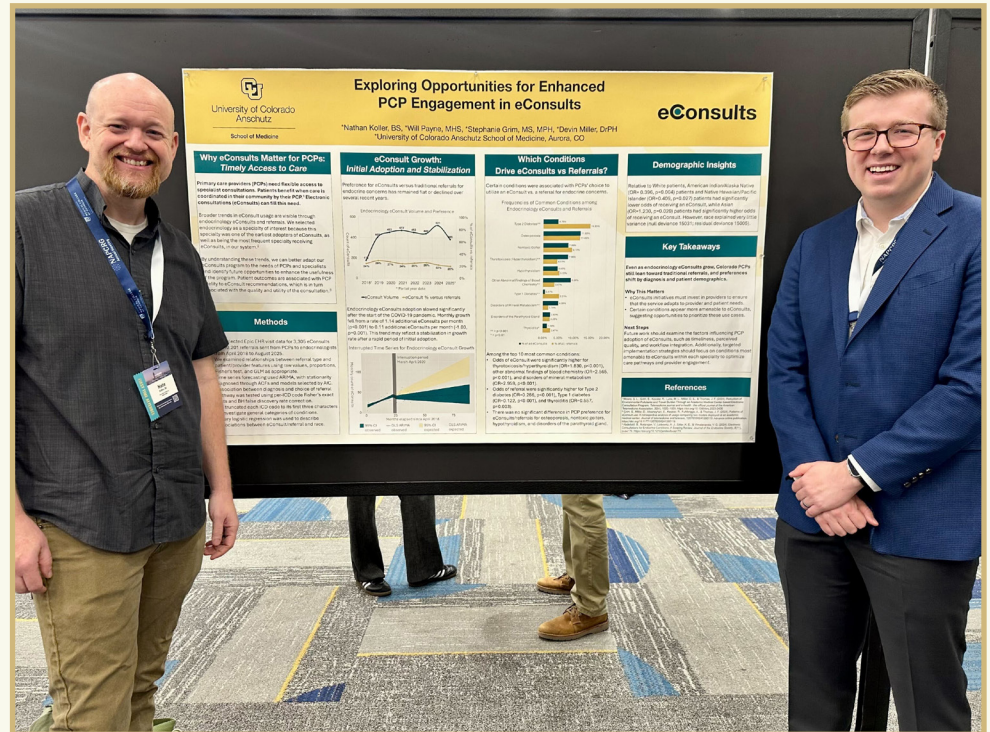
RESEARCH IN ACTION

Over the past year, our team shared original research with peers nationwide at leading venues including the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) Summit, the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) Annual Meeting and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Annual Meeting—bringing Colorado’s innovations to a national audience and learning from leaders across the country.

Advancing eConsults on a National Stage

At the 2025 North American Primary Care Research Group Annual Meeting, our team represented The Care Collaborative alongside colleagues and collaborators and shared recent work on our eConsults program. Our presentations high-lighted how eConsults can expand access to specialty expertise while maintaining a high standard of care. Our research continues to demonstrate how eConsults help primary care clinicians get actionable guidance sooner, supporting faster decision-making and helping patients receive appropriate care without avoidable delays and travel burdens.

Just as important, NAPCRG 2025 created space to learn from others working on creative solutions for the future of primary care. The Care Collaborative team built connections with researchers and clinicians across the U.S., Canada and internationally, and exchanged strategies for making primary care easier to access, more equitable, and more sustainable over time. The team left with practical ideas to strengthen their own work and with new relationships that will accelerate shared learning, ultimately supporting better access to care for Coloradans.



Nate Koller and Will Payne, Atlanta, Georgia

November 2025

CHAPTER TEN

The Next Chapter of Collaboration

This year reinforced a core truth: progress happens when people work together. Across Colorado, partnerships are transforming how care is delivered. Rural clinicians can quickly connect with a specialist at an urban medical center, community providers feel supported rather than isolated, and patients benefit from timely, expert care without leaving their communities.

In 2026, The Care Collaborative is focused on:

- Strengthening and scaling high-impact programs
- Deepening integration with health systems, community providers and academic partners
- Expanding reach into rural, frontier and under-resourced communities
- Advancing evaluation and research to drive measurable outcomes

New opportunities are emerging, from clinical and community partnerships to co-developed learning networks and innovative care models. With expanded funding, technology and policy alignment, we are positioned to grow the workforce and extend expertise to more clinicians across the state.

The path forward is clear: building capacity, strengthening connections, and ensuring every Colorado community has access to high-quality care.

Partner with The Care Collaborative

As health systems face rising demand, workforce shortages and increasing complexity, collaboration is essential. The Care Collaborative offers proven, scalable models that connect expertise to practice.

We partner with campus leaders, state agencies and public health organizations to strengthen provider capacity, expand access to specialty care and accelerate system-wide improvement. Together, we can design solutions that meet local needs while delivering measurable impact at scale.

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The Care Collaborative

Sharing knowledge. Improving health.

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