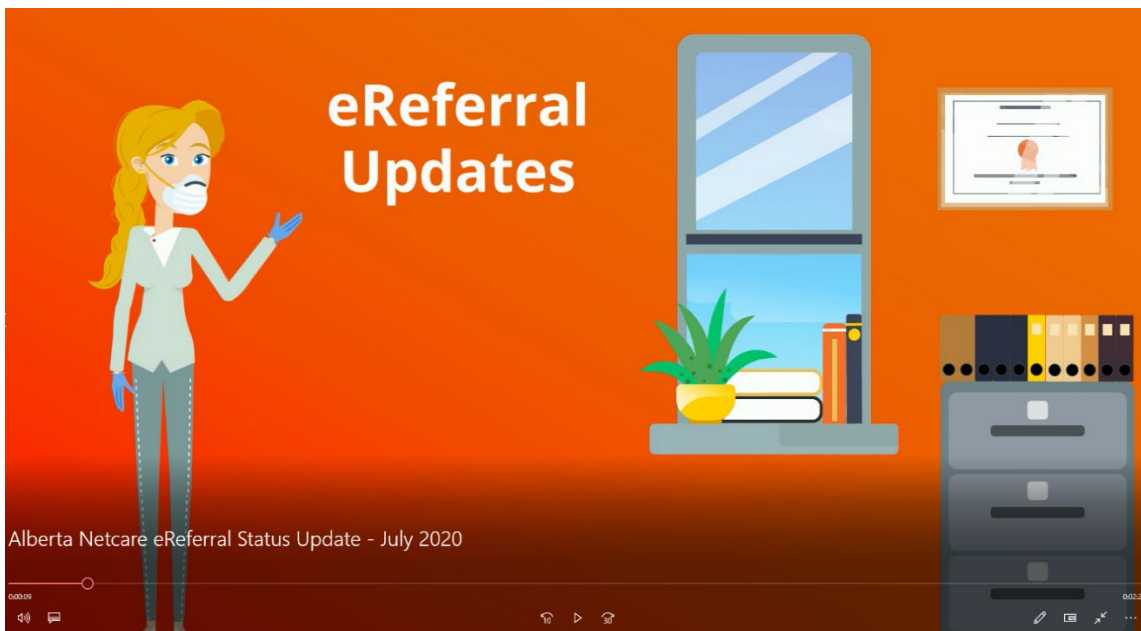


# The Access Improvement Report

August 2020 | Vol 5.2

*A Quarterly Newsletter from Alberta Health Services' Access Improvement Team*

## Program Updates



Over the past few months, we've had many eReferral updates (which is a really great thing)! Instead of listing them in a large paragraph like we've done before, we thought we'd try something a bit different. Our new eReferral update [video](#) highlights the changes made to eReferral Advice and Consult Requests this spring and summer, and provides users with handy resources for additional information. Check it out today!

This fall, we will be focusing our efforts on the Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI). We are prioritizing eReferral Advice and Consult Request onboarding to surgical specialties and will develop implementation plans for future work on referral processes and engagement. In the next *Access Improvement Report*, we'll start a new section dedicated exclusively to our ASI work to keep you updated and informed of the progress.

While COVID-19 has changed many things, we are still working full-steam-ahead. If you have questions or need training support, please do not hesitate to contact our team. We are here to help with anything you may need.

We appreciate your continued support of Access Improvement. Enjoy your summer!



### Get in Touch with Access Improvement

If you have questions, email us at [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca) or call 1-888-733-3755.

For information about eReferral, including training support, visit [eReferral online](#)

For more about QuRE and the Alberta Referral Pathways, visit [Access Improvement](#)

### Unsubscribe

If you'd like to unsubscribe from this newsletter, email [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca)

### Stay Tuned

The next edition of the *Access Improvement Report* will be released in fall 2020.

# Complete the eReferral User Experience Survey Today!

As users, your opinions about eReferral matter. We invite you to complete our annual eReferral User Experience Survey and share your feedback on eReferral's effectiveness, efficiency, flexibility and user friendliness. Information shared through this survey will help us identify future areas for improvement that can benefit all users and enhance the referral-consultation processes for better patient care in Alberta.

To complete the survey, click [here](#). The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and all answers are anonymous. Survey closes on Oct. 10, 2020.

Plus, there is a voluntary option to enter your name into our draw for a chance to win one of two eReferral prize packs! Winners will be announced at the end of October 2020.

For questions or more information, please contact [Yong Li](#).

The plan for this study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta (Ethics ID: Pro00096935). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant or how the research is being conducted, you may contact the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615.



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## A Chat with an eReferral Receiving Provider

Dr. Lategan is a practicing Orthopaedic Surgeon in the North Zone who accepts eReferral Advice Requests for hip and knee joint replacement questions. We chatted with him about the types of questions he receives and helpful tips physicians can use when submitting future Advice Requests.

“Most of the Advice Request questions vary from minor orthopaedic concerns to acute/chronic issues,” says Dr. Lategan. “In my responses, I try to point the referring physician in the right direction or provide an explanation on how to treat the patient. Advice Requests are helping keep patients in the community, reducing the need for referrals.”

According to Dr. Lategan, doctors submitting Advice Requests can increase response efficiency by including the following in their Advice Requests:

- What has been done to date? What has been tried? What's worked? What hasn't worked?
- What is the problem, including what you think the origin is?
- How have you treated the problem to date?
- What do you think the diagnosis is? What treatments/outcomes/investigations lead you to come to this result?
- What is the urgency or level of concern?

“More information from physicians is helpful,” says Dr. Lategan. “Take out the fuzziness so we as specialists can provide advice that is beneficial and useful for your patient.”

# Deep Dive on Specialty Access

Did you know that clinicians in Alberta can utilize **four** different advice options to help answer specialized questions for their patients? Three of the four are for **non-urgent** requests, while the remaining option – **RAAPID** – is for **urgent** requests. Let's take a closer look.

## Alberta Netcare eReferral Advice Request

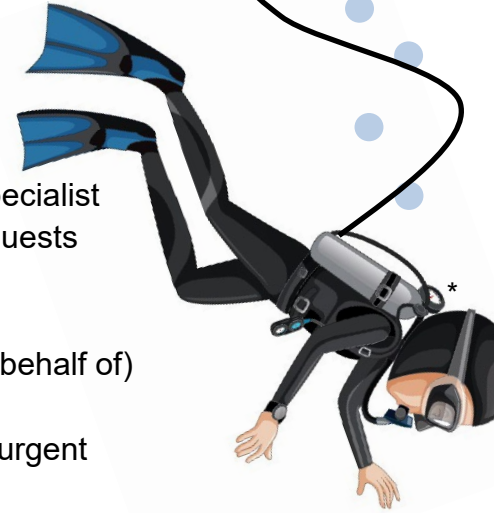
*What is eReferral Advice Request?* **Non-urgent** questions answered by a specialist electronically through Alberta Netcare within five calendar days. Advice Requests can be submitted online 24/7, 365 days a year.

*Zones:* Available province-wide

*Who is this service for?* For physicians and their support staff (who refer on behalf of)

*Number of specialty advice services currently available:* 38

*When should you use eReferral Advice Request?* Whenever you need non-urgent specialty advice and want to submit a request when it's convenient for you.



## Specialist LINK

*What is Specialist LINK?* **Non-urgent** tele-advice with calls returned by a specialist within one hour. Visit [specialistlink.ca](http://specialistlink.ca) or call 403-910-2551 or 1-844-962-5465 Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

*Zones:* Calgary

*Who is this service for?* Physicians only

*Number of tele-advice lines currently available:* 50

*When should you use Specialist LINK?* When you want to talk about a non-urgent issue with a specialist in the Calgary Zone over the phone.



## Connect MD

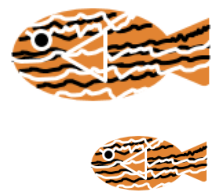
*What is ConnectMD?* **Non-urgent** tele-advice with calls returned within two business days. Call 1-844-633-2263 Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Friday: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

*Zones:* Edmonton & North

*Who is this service for?* Physicians only

*Number of tele-advice specialties currently available:* 37

*When should you use ConnectMD?* When you want to talk about a non-urgent issue with a specialist in the Edmonton or North Zone over the phone.



## Referral, Access, Advice, Placement, Information & Destination (RAAPID)

*What is RAAPID?* A call centre that provides healthcare providers a single point of contact to access consultation advice and/or transfer of patients to a higher level of care facility, and to coordinate the return of patients back to a facility that is closer to home. Go [online](#) for contact numbers.

*Who is this service for?* Physicians only

*Number of specialties available:* Physicians can use RAAPID for all specialty advice questions

*When should you call RAAPID?* When you have an **urgent** request for advice for a patient.



# Use the QuRE Patient & Caregiver Journal!

**QuRE Patient & Caregiver Referral Checklist**

**REFERRING PROVIDER INFORMATION**  
Name, phone, fax, indicate if different from family doctor

**SPECIALIST INFORMATION**  
Name, phone, fax, specialty

**REASON FOR REFERRAL**

- Why am I being referred?
- What kind of specialist am I going to see?
- Am I seeing a specialist to:
  - Determine what is wrong?
  - Treat the condition?
  - Take over care of the condition?
  - Do a procedure?
- Am I being referred to a specific specialist or a group of specialists?
- What are my choices about who to see? Can I pick someone specific?
- How long are the wait times? Is my referral urgent?

**REFERRAL PROCESS**

- When will I find out my appointment details? How will I be informed?
- How long should I wait to call back if I have not heard anything?
- Who should I contact?
- Who do I contact if my symptoms get worse?

**BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT**

- What do I need to do before I see the specialist?
  - eg. Lab tests and/or imaging, and the time frames to get them done
- Who will provide my results to the specialist?
- How will I find out the details about my specialist appointment?
  - eg. Address, directions, parking, etc.
- What information do I need to bring to my specialist appointment?

**NEXT STEPS**

- Are we changing anything in my care today?
- Is there a website or resource you can provide me with for more information?

QuRE is a joint project between Alberta Health Services (AHS), the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across Alberta.

Earlier this year, we shared a sneak peek at a new resource we created for patients and caregivers. Well, the wait is finally over. The QuRE Patient & Caregiver Journal is now available to use.

Through our QuRE work, we heard from patients that they wanted a tool that could help them when meeting with their doctors and specialists. Over the past year, we made it our mission to develop something patients and caregivers could use, and met with primary care, specialists and patient advisors to gather their perspectives in the Journal.

We encourage you to download a copy of the [Journal](#) and give it to your family, friends, colleagues, co-workers and patients. Ask them to use the information within for continued health education and use the new Checklists when talking to their doctors/specialists about referrals and consultations. Ideally, we want this resource to be the go-to guide for navigating the referral/consultation journey and a tool patients and caregivers can trust will help get the answers they need.

To download the Journal, head over to our [QuRE website](#). For your convenience, we have also added single copies of the Patient & Caregiver Referral and Consultation Checklists for you to print out and keep handy. Plus, we encourage users to take a few moments and answer our survey to help us make the Journal even better in the future.

If you are a healthcare professional and would like a poster to post in your office about the Journal, email us at [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca). Large-scale printing of the Journal will also be available through Data Group for AHS employees.

If you have any questions, please email [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca)

**QuRE Patient & Caregiver Consultation Checklist**

**REFERRING PROVIDER INFORMATION**  
Name, phone, fax, indicate if different from family doctor

**SPECIALIST INFORMATION**  
Name, phone, fax, specialty

**PURPOSE OF APPOINTMENT**

- What condition or symptoms are you seeing me for?

**DIAGNOSIS**

- Are you diagnosing me with something? If so, what?
- How certain are you that this is the condition?
- Could I be something else? If so, what?
- Are there any other tests that can be done to confirm this?
- How will this condition affect me?
- Are there effects being seen?
- Is this condition permanent?

**PLAN**

- What will my care plan be?
- What are the risks and benefits of this plan?
- What are my other treatment options?
- What are the risks and benefits of not treating this condition?
- How will I know if this plan is working?
- If the plan does not work, what should I do?

**FOLLOW-UP**

- Will I see you again? When?
- Are you taking over the care of this issue from the doctor that sent me?
- What if I do if my condition gets worse?
- Are you planning to send me to see any other healthcare providers?
- Will you provide the details of the appointment to my primary care/referring provider?
- When will my primary care/referring provider hear about today's visit?
- Where can I get more information?

QuRE is a joint project between Alberta Health Services (AHS), the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across Alberta.

## Alberta Referral Pathway Updates

Alberta Referral Pathways help primary care providers know exactly what's required - like labs and diagnostic imaging - when making a referral. Over the past four years, we've developed 14 pathways and have posted them on the Alberta Referral Pathways website for clinicians' everyday use.

In the coming months, we will be updating some of our pathways, including our Edmonton Zone Urology and provincial Lung Cancer pathways, and adding new ones. Bookmark the [Alberta Referral Pathways](#) page for the latest versions of these pathways.

Referral pathways are an important aspect of work within the Alberta Surgical Initiative (ASI). In the coming months, our team will be working with surgical specialties to better understand their current referral processes and help prepare them for future referral guidelines.

For more information about this work, email [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca)

**EDMONTON ZONE Urology REFERRAL QUICK REFERENCE**

REFERRING PROVIDER	HOW TO REFER	HOW TO REFER	HOW TO REFER	CONTACT CONTACT
Primary Care	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form
Specialist	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form
Emergency	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form	Urology Referral Form

**CALGARY ZONE SLEEP CENTRE REFERRAL QUICK REFERENCE**

REFERRING PROVIDER	HOW TO REFER	HOW TO REFER	HOW TO REFER	CONTACT CONTACT
Primary Care	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form
Specialist	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form
Emergency	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form	Sleep Centre Referral Form

# Who's Who — Access Improvement

Get to know the hardworking team behind eReferral, QuRE and Alberta Referral Pathways with the *Who's Who* employee segment!

This quarter we speak with **Yong Li**, our Data Analyst located in Calgary.

## What do you do on the Access Improvement team?

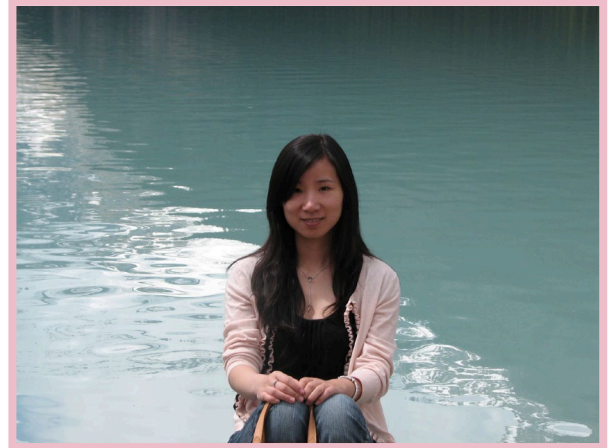
As a data analyst, I am responsible for managing our master data set, running analyses and developing customized reports to inform the current statuses and gaps for improving referral systems in Alberta. I also prepare reports and include tools that can help management and key stakeholders easily understand the data such as statistics, graphics, images and lists.

## How is your role helping transform Alberta's referral experience?

Not only trying am I trying to help my colleagues understand the current eReferral statistics and identify the gaps and areas for improvement, but I also ensure the overall accuracy and quality of the data and present it in ways to help key stakeholders make better quality improvement decisions.

## What's a fun fact about you?

I am the only child in my family, so I was always jealous of friends who have siblings.



*“Photography is an immediate reaction, drawing is a meditation”*

— Henri Cartier-Bresson

## Try the Alberta Referral Directory

### AlbertaReferralDirectory.ca



#### Authentication-free Access

Healthcare providers can now view referral information at [AlbertaReferralDirectory.ca](http://AlbertaReferralDirectory.ca) without logging in, making it easier to search and select the right services for patients. Try it out today!



Alberta Referral Directory  
Your online source for referral information

1-855-889-8899 | [ard@ahs.ca](http://ard@ahs.ca) | [AlbertaReferralDirectory.ca](http://AlbertaReferralDirectory.ca)

## Story Ideas?

Do you have a referral/consultation story you'd like to share? Send it to us at [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca) and we may feature it in the next edition.

\*Background vector created by brgfx - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)



For questions about Access Improvement, email [access.ereferral@ahs.ca](mailto:access.ereferral@ahs.ca)