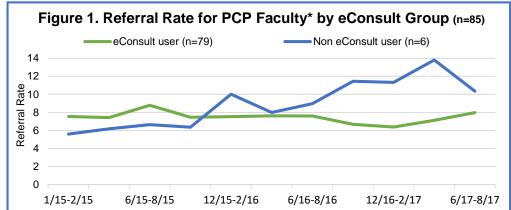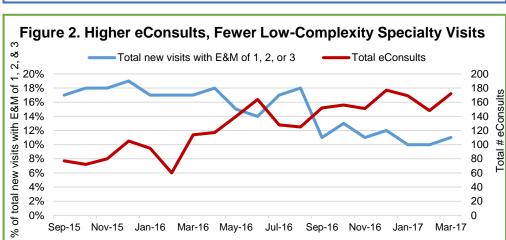# DARTMOUTH-HITCHCOCK: BETTER COMMUNICATION AT THE INTERFACE OF PRIMARY & SPECIALTY CARE

In 2014, Dartmouth-Hitchcock was selected to participate in the Association of American Medical Colleges' Project CORE as a pilot site with four additional academic medical centers. Project CORE improves the referral process between primary care providers (PCPs) and specialists by implementing EMR-based tools known as eConsults and enhanced referrals. With Dartmouth's geographic spread across New Hampshire, the CORE model has been an opportunity to improve communication and coordination between PCPs and specialists. Through targeted outreach to clinics across the state, provider newsletters, and provider workgroups dedicated to customizing the model to Dartmouth, PCPs and specialists have new opportunities to interact and learn from one another.

"I find that eConsults help me feel I have a relationship with specialists!"
-D-H PCP

IMPROVING REFERRALS
During the first three years of the project, referral rates for PCP faculty declined based on the number of eConsults sent, as illustrated in Figure 1. With lower referral rates and a decrease in low-complexity specialty visits, patients have improved access to participating specialties, allowing for more higher-complexity specialty visits, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Referral Rate for PCP Faculty* by eConsult Group (n=85)

Figure 2. Higher eConsults, Fewer Low-Complexity Specialty Visits

95% of PCPs are satisfied with the specialists' eConsult response

~80% of patients who had an eConsult avoided a referral

39 specialties live across adult and pediatric care as of July 2018

*PCP numbers include only those primary care faculty who were present all 3 years of the program

Association of American Medical Colleges