



# Arista|MD

CASE STUDY

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF CARING FOR DUAL-ELIGIBLE MEDICARE / MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES

PCP Success Story Utilizing the AristaMD eConsult Platform



Client Partner:  
**ConcertoHealth**<sup>®</sup>



# Introduction

Americans who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid benefits rely almost entirely on government healthcare programs.

They are characterized by low incomes and suffering disproportionately from multiple chronic conditions, cognitive impairments, low literacy and housing isolation.<sup>1</sup> As a result, dual-eligible Medicare/Medicaid beneficiaries cost the U.S. healthcare system more than \$306 billion annually. Between 2006 and 2015, dual-eligible beneficiaries increased 35 percent, from 8.5 to 11.4 million.<sup>2</sup> CMS reports that at least 60 percent of this population is diagnosed with three or more chronic conditions and requires relatively complex care.<sup>3</sup>

Health systems must transform traditional care delivery methods and employ new tools to successfully care for this co-morbid patient population. Innovative health systems have employed numerous strategies to control costs while maintaining high quality care, including the implementation of population health management tools, new payment models, care management, and the introduction of telehealth resources.

**ConcertoHealth**, a globally capitated medical group managing 24,000 dual-eligible and Medicare patients, has developed innovative strategies to support dual-eligibles. Its care model addresses critical patient vulnerabilities by expanding access to personalized and high-touch primary care, enacting chronic condition management, and coordinating transitions between care settings. Central to its approach is a dedication to deploy comprehensive clinical resources that extend the reach of primary care providers. >>



“ Committed to providing comprehensive care to the communities we serve, by surrounding providers and their patients with the individualized support they need to improve health outcomes. ”

–ConcertoHealth

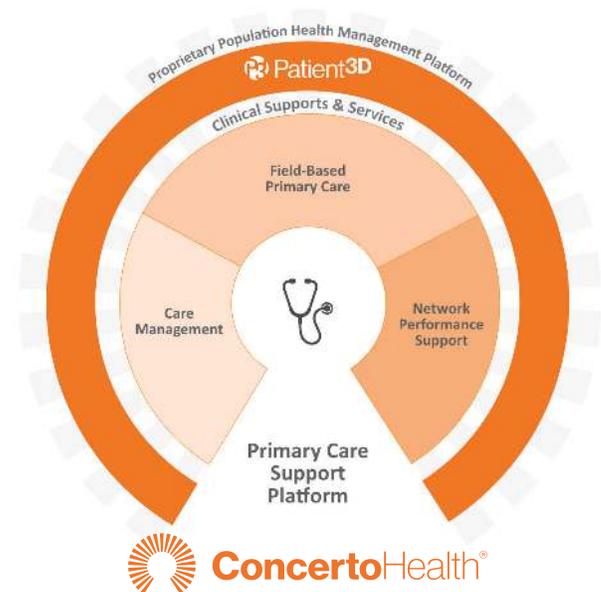


## CARE MODEL

### Patient<sup>3D</sup>

The ConcertoHealth proprietary population health platform delivers a single source of longitudinal patient data, population insights, and performance reporting at the point-of-care.

- Point-of-care decision support and performance management
- Population health and predictive analytics, medical economics
- Customized and data-driven clinical program development
- Medical economics and network performance management analytics



# Challenge

**ConcertoHealth** faced challenges in providing its patients with appropriate access to timely and effective specialist consultations. Ensuring this access is essential to preventing unnecessary hospital admissions, reducing emergency department (ED) admissions, lowering anxiety for patients and caregivers, and mitigating the burden and strain for primary care physicians (PCPs).

Access issues for elderly and vulnerable dual-eligible patients, such as specialists not accepting insurance plans, exacerbate existing logistical challenges. As a result, these patients experience long wait times for appointments and deteriorating health while awaiting necessary specialist consultation and treatment. Timely intervention is important to avoid costly ED admissions, especially for the 65% of the ConcertoHealth dual-eligible patient cohort diagnosed with behavioral health conditions. This complex-needs population also exhibits low healthcare literacy and follow-through, further jeopardizing the outcomes from referral-based specialty care.

## ConcertoHealth Patient Population Breakdown:

- 38% cardiovascular disease
- 32% congestive heart failure
- 29% diabetes
- 52% with 3 or more co-morbidities



This high level of co-morbidity limits the ability of primary care providers to manage these complex patients without specialist support. Yet the need for specialist care is growing at a time when the nation is confronting a specialist shortage, which The Association of American Medical Colleges predicts to reach between 28,000 and 64,000 by 2025.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, the factors limiting specialty care access were having a negative effect on patient outcomes. ConcertoHealth assessed improvement opportunities and determined the most viable solution would be to empower PCPs to expand their scope of care by creating access to specialist insights without the need to transition care or for patients to travel. >>

## BROKEN PROCESS

Before AristaMD eConsults, ConcertoHealth used a manual process to identify specialists in-network for referring in-person visits. Primary care providers (PCPs) aimed to conduct appointments as follow-up to such specialist visits. Objectives were to review specialist visit results and reinforce compliance with the treatment plan. This process was imperfect for several reasons:

- Patients would forget to go to their specialist consult
- The consult would be scheduled too far into the future
- The follow-up appointment with the PCP would take place before the consult with the specialist
- After visit completion, patients would have difficulty recalling or understanding recommendations given by the specialist, often due to forgotten paperwork

“Even when the ConcertoHealth team approached the specialist office directly, typically the patient would have missed the consult with the specialist, or the specialist office was not reliable in closing the information loop (e.g. forget to fax patient records).”



# Solution

After a thorough evaluation process of available technologies, **ConcertoHealth** partnered with **AristaMD**, whose eConsult Platform facilitates communication between PCPs and specialists via eConsults.

An eConsult is an asynchronous, digital consultation between the PCP and the specialist that provides timely access to high-quality clinical guidance through a seamless, secure online communications and information exchange. The HIPAA-compliant Smart Care Platform connects PCPs to a national, board-certified panel of specialists, who represent more than 70 specialty and subspecialty areas and return eConsults, often delivered within a few hours.

Additionally, AristaMD's eConsult Platform offers ~400 clinical work-up checklists originally created by clinicians at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF). These condition-specific guidelines include recommendations for clinical assessments, labs and diagnostics, ensuring the appropriate workup is completed every time. >>



“ When embraced, eConsults became a tool for providers to help them become a ‘Super PCP’ eConsults help PCPs to serve as the sole provider to the patients. ”



**“ ConcertoHealth initially launched a pilot of the AristaMD Smart Care Platform at three Puget Sound Care Centers with six PCPs. The goal was to provide answers to two questions:**

- 1. Is the AristaMD Smart Care Platform capable of equipping a PCP to deliver more comprehensive care?**
- 2. Is turnaround time and clinical workflow sufficient for PCPs to incorporate specialist guidance into treatment plans? ”**

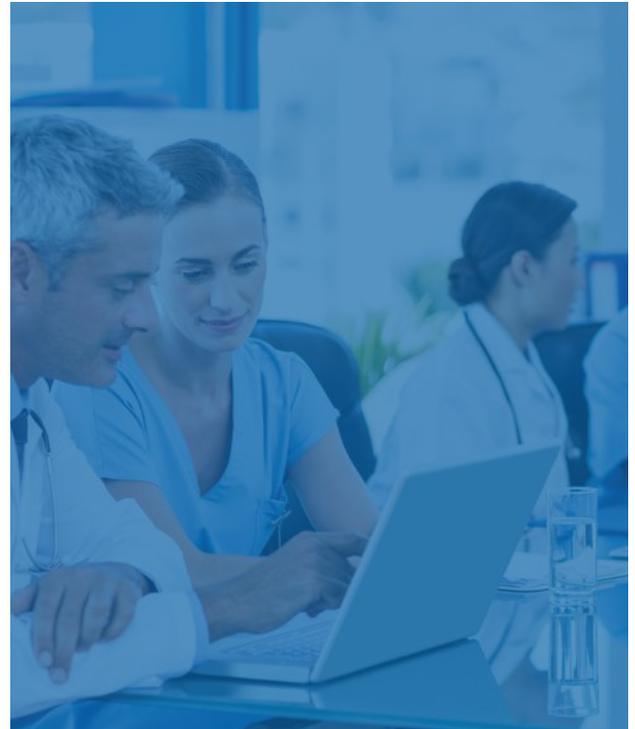


# Results

**ConcertoHealth** leadership was thoroughly satisfied with how the pilot met its program goals; and decided to expand implementation of the platform into the entire Detroit-metro market for further evaluation and testing. Following more positive results, ConcertoHealth now makes the AristaMD Smart Care platform accessible to PCPs in all its locations throughout Michigan and Washington.

AristaMD eConsults provided timely and actionable feedback for ConcertoHealth providers. It is extremely difficult to get patients with behavioral health diagnoses to attend specialist consults in Washington. Instead of waiting for a specialist to become available, ConcertoHealth PCPs are now empowered to engage a specialist through eConsults within hours in order to receive the information and take appropriate treatment action.

The immediate and tangible impact of eConsults for ConcertoHealth is the ability to avoid unnecessary referrals, while the long-term benefits include avoiding unnecessary admissions and readmissions. In these ways, AristaMD's platform was able to support the ConcertoHealth PCPs' ability to maintain the health of their patients with an increase in quality of care—at a lower cost.



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In addition, eConsults were shown to deliver value across a broad spectrum of conditions. For example:

- **Endocrine specialists** consulting on insulin-dosing regimens as part of diabetic medical management as well as pain management.
- **Orthopedic specialists** consulting on patients' report of pain. Instead of going to the ED for imaging, patients visit ConcertoHealth PCPs first, who are then equipped to address these situations by using eConsults and often avoid unnecessary imaging.

"Today, ConcertoHealth providers actively notify the patient when they use eConsults. This is a selling point for care providers. PCPs are not afraid to indicate when they don't have an immediate answer; but are confident in declaring that they have a specialist on-hand through eConsults, and are equipped to provide an answer in a timely fashion." **MD**

Learn more about the value AristaMD can provide your health system to achieve quadruple goals. Contact us at [info@aristamd.com](mailto:info@aristamd.com).

## STATS / METRICS

Overall ConcertoHealth has seen a **17.1% drop in readmissions year-over-year\*** thanks to the AristaMD platform, along with other implemented resources. Further, the AristaMD eConsult platform and clinical workup checklists resulted in:

**73%**

Replaced need for in-person specialist visit



**30%**

Reduction in hospital admission



**50%+**

Response time under 6 hours



**85%**

Significant influence on the plan of care



■ **Increased patient satisfaction**, as patients gain greater access to specialty care without having to leave the comfort and familiarity of their own PCP's office, further sparing them the time and expense of transportation to a specialist's office

■ **Increased PCP satisfaction**, with providers able to evolve relationships with specialists, and work in a "virtual multi-specialty group practice," which improves practice scope, enhances real-time learning and enriches the professional experience

■ **Downward trend of inpatient medical cost** from pre-pilot to current state, while professional cost has remained stable



\* Since December 2015

Case Study by **AristaMD** 9

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Transforming patient care through specialist eConsults

<sup>1</sup> - Prindiville K and Burke G. MEDICARE AND MEDICAID ALIGNMENT Challenges and Opportunities for Serving Dual Eligibles. Aug 2011. [http://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/RE\\_DualsAlignmentBrief-NSCLC.pdf](http://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/RE_DualsAlignmentBrief-NSCLC.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> - CMS Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office. Data Analysis Brief: Medicare-Medicaid Dual Enrollment from 2006 through 2015. Dec 2016.

<sup>3</sup> - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Physical and Mental Health Condition Prevalence and Comorbidity among Fee-for-Service Medicare-Medicaid Enrollees. Sept 2016.

<sup>4</sup> - American Association of Medical Colleges. New Research Confirms Looming Physician Shortage. May 2016.

For more information or to request a demo, contact us.  
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