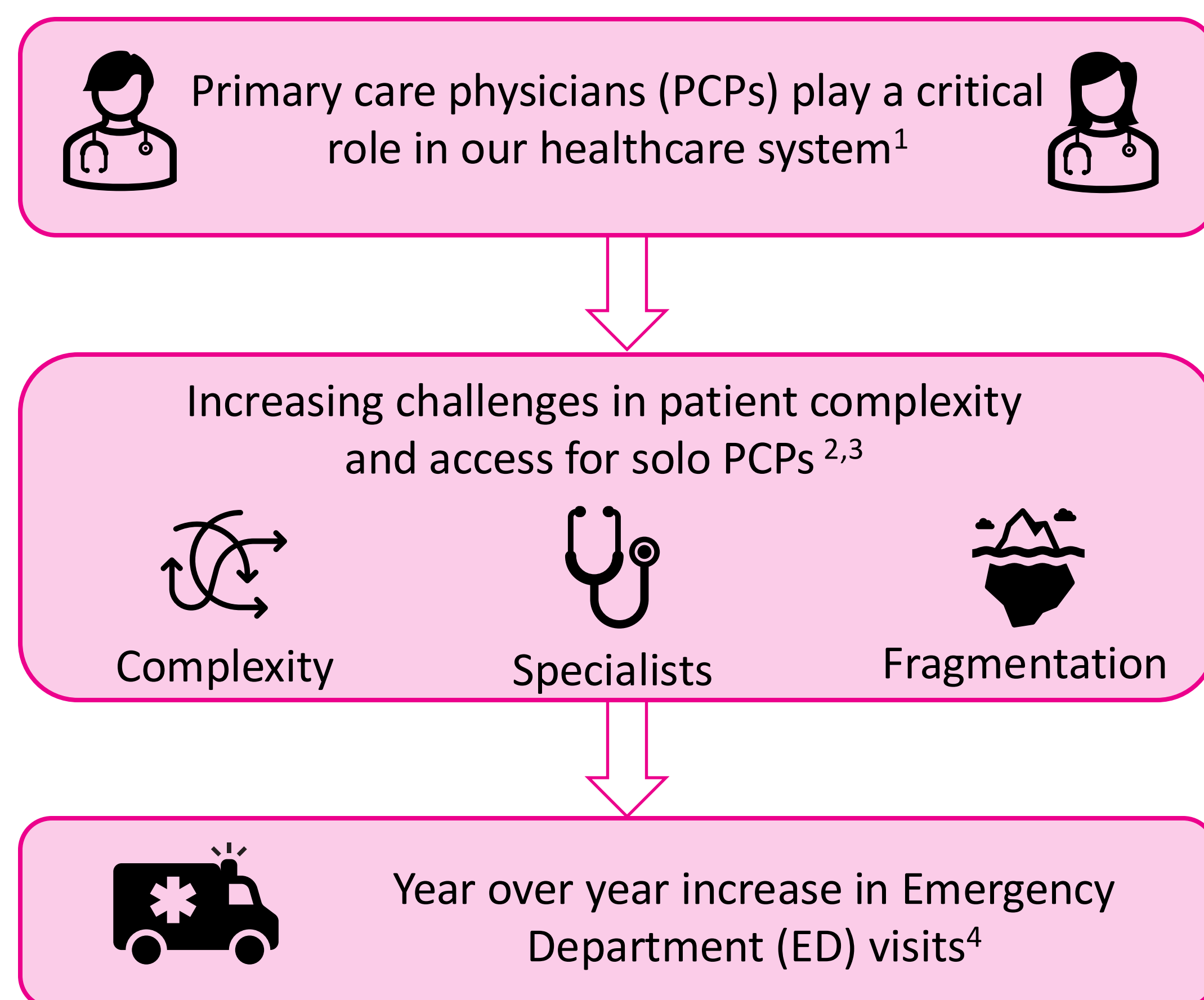


The Impact of Connecting Primary Care Physicians to General Internists in Real-time on Emergency Department Visits Across Ontario

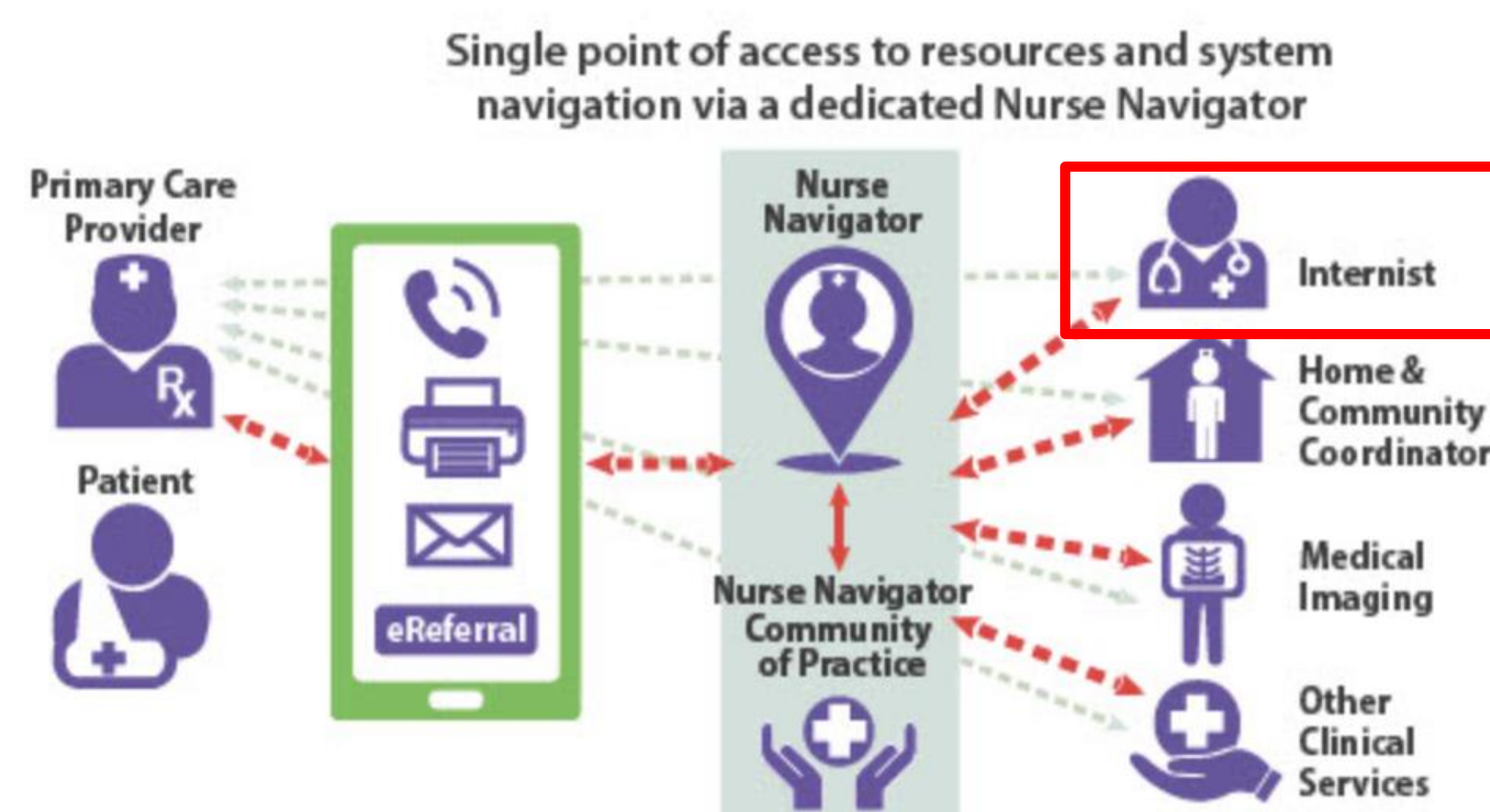
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Background



SCOPE Framework



- Seamless Care Optimizing the Patient Experience (SCOPE) is a program that connects PCPs to multiple services⁵.
- Aims to assist PCPs as they are often the first point of contact for patients.
- 17 SCOPE sites across Ontario with 2000+ PCPs

Research Aim

This project aims to evaluate the impact of providing PCPs with direct access to a GIM consultant on healthcare utilization, including ED visits as well as subspecialty consults.

Intervention and Methods

- PCPs contact SCOPE GIM by calling the Navigation Hub's hospital-based nurse.
- The nurse fields the patient's presenting concern to the general internal medicine (GIM) consultant, who decides whether the patient will be booked for an appointment or whether phone/email care will be provided.
- At Women's College Hospital, PCPs contact GIM consultants directly.
- PCPs who contacted the SCOPE GIM consultant at one of the 17 sites across Ontario between December 4, 2023 and June 17, 2025, were surveyed 7 days post-contact.

Survey Questions Asked to PCPs who Contacted SCOPE GIM

What would you have done if you did not have access to the GIM consultant for this specific patient?

- Sent to the ED
- Referred to a specialist
- Paged a specialist on call
- Asked a colleague in your clinic or personal network
- Sent an e-consult
- Handled the concern independently
- Other

*One answer only

To the best of your knowledge, what happened to this specific patient within the week following their SCOPE GIM consultant visit?

- They presented to the ED for the same concern
- They presented to the ED for a different concern
- They were admitted to hospital for the same concern
- They were admitted to hospital for a different concern
- They saw the SCOPE GIM consultant again for the same concern
- They saw the SCOPE GIM consultant again for a different concern
- You referred them to a specialist
- You handled their concern independently

*More than one answer allowed

Results

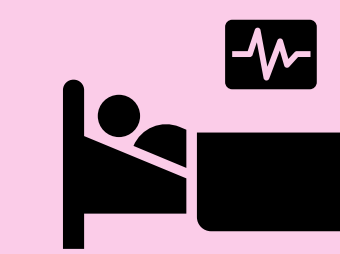
414 surveys were sent out.
105 completed surveys received

Impact on ED Visits

41/105 cases would have been sent to the ED without SCOPE GIM

7 of these 41 cases presented to the ED in the week following their GIM visit

32% of total contacts prevented an ED visit

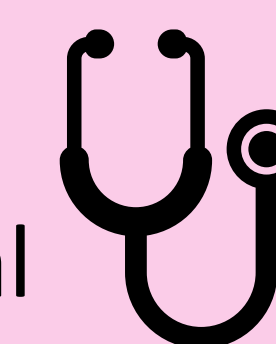


Impact on Specialist Referrals

31/105 cases would have been referred to a specialist without SCOPE GIM

1 of these 31 cases ultimately required a specialist referral

97% of total contacts prevented a specialist referral



Feedback from PCP Participants

“

“My patient saw SCOPE GIM the following week for a schedule follow up. Saves patients unnecessary ED visits. Appreciate SCOPE. Thank You.”

“Excellent service. I was very grateful for the advice I received. Being able to speak directly to a specialist on the phone and ask follow-up or clarification questions is great.”

“ This is an excellent program which promotes collaboration and improves patient care. My patient was very pleased with the care she received. ”

“ This is truly a wonderful service. Has improved access for difficult cases. Has helped to decrease. Wait times for individuals especially that was being worked up for malignancies. Fantastic program. ”

Conclusions and Engagement

- The SCOPE GIM consultant service was designed to **support PCPs** in the management of their patients.
- This study demonstrates that **GIM support resulted in avoidance of ED visits as well as expedited patient care.**
- Future work should focus on **increasing uptake of the service to reduce healthcare utilization and streamline patient care.**
- The study's purpose and survey were conceptualized with the **input of PCPs from both academic and community sites.**

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