

INTRODUCTION

The Montréal Centre de répartition des demandes de services (CRDS) was created to simplify public access to specialized medical services. The CRDS makes it easier for front-line family physicians by guaranteeing access to specialists to assess their patients. The CRDS also supports specialists by ensuring that consultation requests are directed to the right place and given the proper priority. Making sure patients are matched with the right service providers saves time for everyone involved.

The CRDS provides a unique access to patients requiring a referral to a specialist working in a hospital or clinic. The Montreal CRDS will be operational as of October 24, 2016.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Who does the CRDS serve?

The CRDS assists family physicians who would like to set up an initial consultation with a specialist for a patient. For the time being, the CRDS does not accept consultation requests from family physicians practicing in a CHSLD or from emergency physicians, optometrists or medical specialists.

2. What specialized fields does the CRDS make referrals for?

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| As of October 24, 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiology • Gastroenterology • Nephrology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurology • General pediatrics • ORL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ophtalmology • Orthopedics • Urology |
| As of Winter 2016-2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General surgery • Dermatology • Endocrinology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gynecology-obstetrics • Oncohematology • Internal medicine • Microbiology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respirology • Psychiatry • Rheumatology |
| As of Spring 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic surgery • Vascular surgery • Geriatrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunology and allergy clinic • Physical medicine and rehabilitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurosurgery • Medical oncology |

3. How does the CRDS work?

The Montreal CRDS is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Montreal CRDS team is made up of :

- One nurse coordinator
- Nurse clinicians
- Clerks

When needed, the CRDS nurses may consult with medical officers appointed by the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ).

Referrals will be made in accordance with three criteria :

- The recommended time frame for the patient's clinical condition
- The location of the patient's residence
- The registered referral (name of a particular physician or point of service) if required

When it is not possible to make a referral that meets all of these criteria, the CRDS will suggest alternative options to the physician to ensure the patient is referred to a suitable specialist in a timely manner.

4. How can I get in touch with the CRDS?

You can direct your questions to :

Telephone : 514 762-CRDS (2737)

Fax : 514 732-5121

Email : crdsmontreal.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

MEDICAL SPECIALIST REGISTRATION

In order to effectively carry out its mission, the CRDS must know which medical specialists are practising in the area. The CRDS must also know each practitioner's area of specialization and the location of their office or clinic. Medical specialists wishing to communicate this information may do so by registering with the Montreal CRDS.

5. As a medical specialist, how do I register with the CRDS?

Medical specialists are asked to fill out the registration form available at :

inscription.crdsmtl.ca

6. Do I need to reserve certain time slots for CRDS referrals?

Yes. It is very important that medical specialists reserve time slots for CRDS referrals. Specifically :

- For medical specialists working in institutions: Inform your appointment centre manager of your availabilities. Appointment centre managers and the CRDS have already established procedures for communicating these time slots.
- For medical specialists working in a clinic: Inform the CRDS of your available time slots by email, fax or telephone.

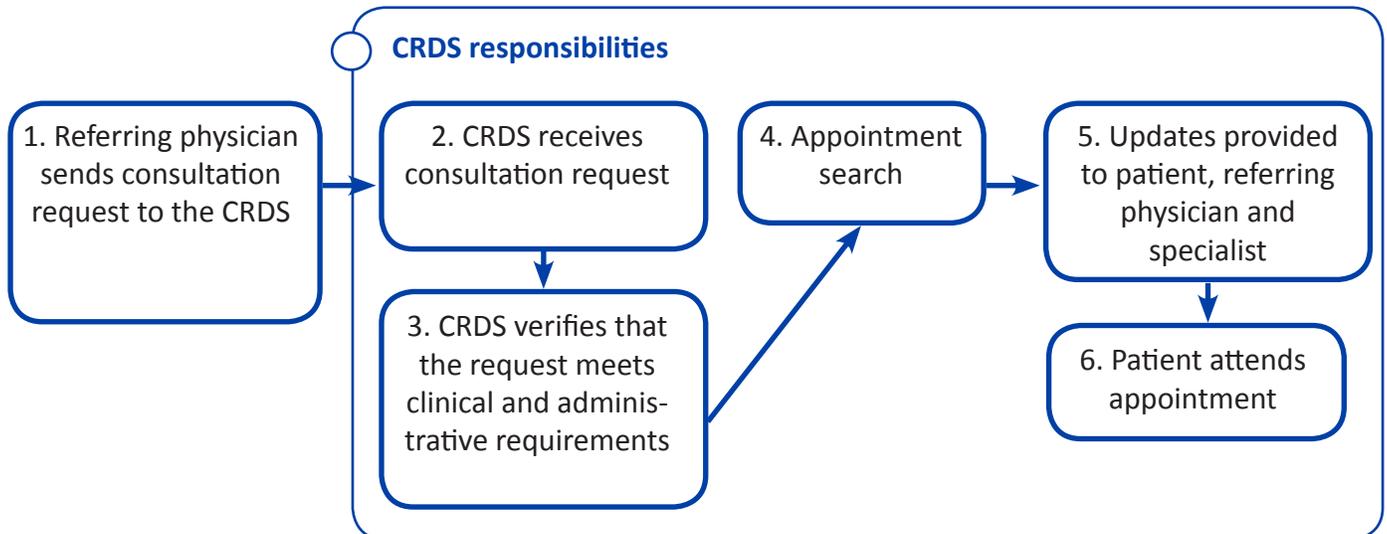
The CRDS will schedule appointments within these specific time slots.

7. How often do I have to inform the CRDS of my available time slots?

The CRDS must always be informed of available time slots for the next three months.

HOW SPECIALIST CONSULTATION REQUESTS ARE PROCESSED

This flowchart shows how specialist consultation requests are processed by the Montreal CRDS.



The following pages contain a description of each step in this process, as well as a series of related questions and answers.

1. Referring physician sends consultation request to the CRDS

The process begins when the consultation request is sent to the CRDS.

Only the referring physicians specified in Question 1 can send consultation requests to the CRDS for the specialities listed in Question 2. There is a specific form for each speciality.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS CONCERNING STEP 1 :

Consultation requests

8. As a referring physician, how can I access the consultation request forms?

The forms are available on the electronic medical records (EMRs) used by physicians. Those who do not use EMRs can access the forms in dynamic PDF format on the MSSS website or on the Montreal CRDS Portail Santé Montréal webpage (www.crdsmtl.ca). Paper copies will not be distributed.

9. Who should I contact if I would like to provide feedback about the forms?

All feedback about the forms should be sent to the president of the association representing the specialized field in question.

10. Once I have filled out the consultation request form, how do I send it to the CRDS?

Initially, referring physicians are to submit consultation requests by fax to 514 732-5121. At a later date, forms will be submitted electronically via the EMRs.

11. What does the clinical priority scale on the consultation request form refer to?

| Clinical priority code | Seen by/within |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Urgent | Directed to Emergency |
| A | ≤ 3 days |
| B | ≤ 10 days |
| C | ≤ 28 days |
| D | ≤ 3 months |
| E | ≤ 12 months |

Specific referral

12. As a referring physician, can I request that my patient be seen by a specific specialist, clinic or institution?

Yes. All forms have a specific referral section allowing you to request a specific specialist, clinic or institution. If it is not possible to schedule an appointment with the specific specialist, clinic or institution in the predetermined time period, the Montreal CRDS will suggest other options to the referring physician to ensure that the patient is provided with a suitable and timely consultation.

Single point of contact

13. As a referring physician, how should I proceed if one of my patients does not reside in the same CRDS area as my practice? (For example, a referring physician based in Montreal whose patient lives in Laval)

The referring physician should send the consultation request to the CRDS in the area where he or she practices, regardless of where the patient resides. The CRDS is responsible for transferring the consultation request to the CRDS in the patient's area.

14. Can I send a consultation request to the CRDS and then give a copy to the patient so that he or she can look for a specialist?

No. Effective October 24, 2016, family physicians should only call on the CRDS to schedule first appointments with specialists working in the fields listed in Question 2.

Pediatric patients

15. Are pediatric conditions included in the consultation requests?

To refer pediatric patients, physicians should use the General Pediatrics consultation request form. The ORL and ophthalmology consultation request forms also contain certain pediatric conditions. Referring physicians should use existing mechanisms for any pediatric sub-specialties.

Patient communications

16. Should patients contact the CRDS?

No. The CRDS will contact the patient upon receipt of the consultation request form submitted by the patient's physician. The referring physician can nonetheless provide the patient with the CRDS's contact information, in case the patient wishes to obtain additional information.

2. CRDS receives the consultation request

Once the CRDS receives the consultation request, it is responsible for scheduling an appointment with a medical specialist. There are several steps in the process, including verifying the request and entering the information in the computer system.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS CONCERNING STEP 2 :

17. How are consultation requests processed once they have been received by the CRDS?

Once the CRDS receives the consultation request, it verifies that the form meets all requirements (see following section). Requests are processed in order of clinical priority, ensuring that priorities A, B and C are handled first. Once the consultation request has been recorded in the computer system, the CRDS proceeds with looking for a suitable specialist and appointment time.

18. What does the CRDS do if the patient does not have a family physician?

Referring physicians must indicate on the form whether or not the patient has a family physician. If a patient does not have a family physician, the CRDS will help him or her register on the GAMF (guichet d'accès à un médecin de famille).

19. As a referring physician, will I be sent a confirmation from the CRDS that my consultation request has been received?

For Priority A, B and C consultation requests: Referring physicians will receive confirmation from the Montreal CRDS specifying the date and location of the appointment, as well as the specialist's name.

For Priority D and E consultation requests: Referring physicians will be sent a confirmation that simply states that the request has been received. Later, the referring physician will receive information from the CRDS about the date and location of the appointment, as well as the specialist's name.

3. CRDS verifies that the request meets clinical and administrative requirements

Prior to looking for an appointment for the patient, the CRDS must first ensure that the consultation request meets all clinical and administrative requirements.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS CONCERNING STEP 3 :

20. What requirements do consultation requests have to meet?

Consultation requests must meet two types of requirements :

- 1) **Administrative requirements:** The sections for patient information and referring physician information must both be completed accurately.
- 2) **Clinical requirements:** The Reason for Consultation section must be completed accurately. If none of the reasons for consultation describes the patient's clinical condition, the referring physician must indicate the reason for consultation in the Other section and add a clinical priority rating (A-B-C-D-E) in the corresponding field.

If a form has not been filled out properly, the Montreal CRDS will contact the referring physician to correct it.

Clinical priority

21. What is the mechanism for verifying a clinical priority rating changed by the referring physician?

A CRDS nurse will contact the referring physician for more information about why the rating was changed. When necessary, the nurse will consult with a medical officer from the specialized field in question.

REQUIRED EXAMINATIONS (PREREQUISITES) PRIOR TO CONSULTING WITH A SPECIALIST

22. How are prerequisites managed?

For some of the clinical conditions listed on the form, certain examinations must be completed prior to the patient's appointment with the specialist. The CRDS will schedule appointments for examinations that are difficult to access, such as MRIs and ultrasounds. The referring physician must send the CRDS a request for the prerequisite examination along with the consultation request.

The patient will be informed of the steps taken by the CRDS to schedule appointments for prerequisite examinations.

4. Appointment search

Once the Montreal CRDS has received the consultation request from the referring physician, entered it into the computer system and validated it, the CRDS will then look for a suitable specialist and appointment time.

At this step, CRDS staff will try to schedule an appointment that is suitable for the patient's clinical priority rating and place of residence. If a specific referral is indicated on the consultation request, the specified service provider will be contacted. If no appointment is available during the predetermined time frame, the CRDS will contact the referring physician to see if he or she would like the CRDS to seek an appointment with a different specialist within the predetermined time frame or if he or she would rather extend the time frame so that an appointment can be booked with the specified service provider.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS CONCERNING STEP 4

23. How does the CRDS ensure that consultation requests are assigned equitably among medical specialists?

Mechanisms have been developed to enable the CRDS's clerks to schedule appointments with medical specialists on a rotational basis. The CRDS's computer system also produces reports to ensure that appointments are assigned equitably.

24. What happens if the time slots that the medical specialist reserves for CRDS referrals are not all used?

Any time slots not used for CRDS referrals will be automatically unblocked 72 hours prior to the date of the availability.

5. Updates provided to patient, referring physician and specialist

In order to keep referring physicians, specialists and patients informed of the appointment scheduling process, the Montreal CRDS provides updates at various key stages of the process.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS CONCERNING STEP 5

25. What type of information does the CRDS share with :

The referring physician

For Priority A, B and C consultation requests: Referring physicians will receive confirmation from the Montreal CRDS specifying the date and location of the appointment, as well as the specialist's name.

For Priority D and E consultation requests: Referring physicians will be sent a confirmation that the request has been received. Later, the referring physician will receive information from the CRDS about the date and location of the appointment, as well as the specialist's name.

The patient

CRDS staff will contact the patient as soon as the duly completed consultation request is received. During this initial communication, the CRDS will confirm that it has received the consultation request and inquire about the patient's availabilities. Subsequently, the CRDS will contact the patient again to confirm the time, date and location of the appointment with the medical specialist. All relevant information about the appointment will then be communicated to the patient (e.g. where to obtain the required hospital card, where to park, where to call in case of a delay or cancellation, etc.).

The medical specialist

Once the appointment has been scheduled, the CRDS will send the consultation request completed by the referring physician to the medical specialist. Consequently, the patient will not have a copy of the consultation request when he or she attends the appointment.

6. Patient attends appointment

Once the entire appointment scheduling process is complete, the patient can attend the appointment with the medical specialist scheduled by the Montreal CRDS.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS CONCERNING STEP 6

Confirming, changing or cancelling an appointment

26. Who is responsible for confirming appointments with patients?

As previously mentioned, the CRDS is responsible for scheduling an appointment for the patient based on the pre-determined criteria. Subsequently, the CRDS will contact the patient to inform him of the time, date and location of the appointment with the medical specialist. The clinic or appointment centre is responsible for confirming the appointment with the patient. This may be a few days prior to the appointment, depending current practices.

27. Who should patients contact if they wish to change or cancel an appointment?

Patients should contact the appointment centre or clinic where the appointment is scheduled. After scheduling the appointment, the CRDS will provide the patient with the contact information of the clinic or appointment centre.

28. What will the clinic or appointment centre do if the patient cancels the appointment?

The clinic or appointment centre will follow whatever procedures are already in effect. It is not mandatory to send a letter to the referring physician to inform him or her that the patient cancelled the appointment.

29. What will the clinic or appointment centre do if the patient changes the date of the appointment?

To the extent possible, the clinic or appointment centre will try to find a new appointment time that still meets the time period requirement for the patient's clinical condition and falls within the specialist's time slots reserved for CRDS referrals. If no other time slot is available, the clinic or appointment centre will send the consultation request back to the CRDS to find a solution.

30. What will the clinic or appointment centre do if the patient does not attend the appointment?

To the extent possible, the clinic or appointment centre will contact the patient and try to find a new appointment time that still meets the time period requirement for the patient's clinical condition and falls within the specialist's time slots reserved for CRDS referrals. The clinic or appointment centre will follow the procedure set out in the MSSSS 2009-019 bulletin. If the clinic or appointment centre finds a suitable appointment time, there is no need to inform the CRDS. If no other time slot is available, the clinic or appointment centre will send the consultation request back to the CRDS to find a solution.

31. What will the clinic or appointment centre do if the patient's appointment must be rescheduled or cancelled? (Due to a change in the specialist's availability)

The clinic or appointment centre is responsible for contacting the patient and finding an appointment that meets the time period requirement for the patient's clinical condition. The CRDS must be informed of the new appointment date. If no other time slot is available, the clinic or appointment centre will send the consultation request back to the CRDS to find a solution.

Consultation reports

32. Who is responsible for ensuring that the medical specialist's consultation report is sent to the referring physician?

The medical specialist is responsible for sending the consultation report to the referring physician. The report should not be sent to the CRDS.

FOR ALL OTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE MONTREAL CRDS

Telephone : 514 762-CRDS (2737) | Fax : 514 732-5121 | Email : crdsmontreal.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca