

CareConnect eReferral Update for Auckland GPs

The Auckland CareConnect eReferral project is gaining momentum with a number of new developments which should be of interest to GPs.

Electronic triage (processing) of referrals has begun for some services; other services to follow.

Faster, safer, and more efficient processing of eReferrals should follow from the move to process eReferrals electronically - all the more reason to use the eReferral platform to send referrals or communicate with hospital specialists about your patients. In fact, the success of the electronic handling of referrals depends on most referrals coming in electronically by eReferral - the handling of faxed or posted referrals is likely to be slower since services have to manage two different systems.

In Waitemata, Paediatrics and Cardiology will be the first services using the electronic handling of messages and referrals from GPs.

At Counties Manukau ORL and Rheumatology are the first services to eTriage.

ADHBs will begin its first services triaging post -1 July.

Please help these services lead the way by using eReferrals!

Messaging to GPs

The new hospital system for managing eReferrals electronically supports direct messaging to GPs' inboxes. This should make it possible to get messages back quickly from hospital consultants reading the GP's referral. Remember the options available in the "reason for referral" drop down box include "specialist advice". Please note that it will take some months for most services to start using the new messaging functionality for their reply, but watch out for messages from our paediatricians starting immediately.

There may be some temporary duplication of status update messages as we migrate from one system to the other. This will be addressed in the coming weeks, and we appreciate your patience with this in the interim.

Remaining services coming online

Older Adults and Allied Health are coming to eReferrals on 26/03/2014; a long awaited development. Allied health includes district nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, etc. Mental Health services are also not far away. Soon you will be able to use CareConnect eReferrals for all your DHB referrals.

Form revision and improvement continues

The complexity of some service forms has been closely examined. Clearly there is a compromise between trying to collect enough information for services where demand is high (and decisions about priority are most difficult), and making forms easy enough for busy GPs to use. You will soon see that forms for conditions such as spine problems, some surgical conditions, and colonoscopy have been simplified. Remember that the ? icon on forms links to useful information, usually on Healthpoint. Only fields with the red * are required; other fields can be ignored if not relevant. The information you enter in the "Referral details" section is the most important and useful for the reader and it needs to clarify what the issues are.

The Waitemata DHB "Improving the journey" project seeks to fast-track patients for elective surgery. The requirements for this project include the collection of a minimum amount of data to safely assess patients for their priority and suitability for fast-track booking. Familiarisation with and use of these templates can seem slow and frustrating for some GPs and we appreciate your support to make the new system work.

eReferral forms will continue to evolve to match up with other developments, such as regional pathways, and to better meet the needs of both GPs and hospital services. Please give the eReferral team your feedback by using the "Help/Feedback" tab on the eReferral form, or emailing the eReferral team.

Using eReferrals for radiology requests

The increasing use of eReferrals for Radiology is welcomed. Requesting via eReferrals benefits referrer, patient, and radiology department workflow.

Adult Radiology requests received via eReferrals will have met the acceptance criteria agreed across the Auckland region by a clinical group of GPs and radiologists. Patients referred using eReferrals will be automatically placed onto the booking lists without the intrinsic delay of referral triage. Faxed requests will continue to require triaging. As required for ongoing evaluation, there will be regular audit of 5% of Radiology eReferrals at each DHB.


Interface improvements

The company providing the CareConnect eReferral platform (Healthlink) continues to tweak the interface to make it easier to use - for example, you may notice that the “referral details” box (where the important information about the patient is entered) now expands as data is entered. The dialogue buttons around adding attachments have been modified to make it clearer how to use them.

Technical support

A few practices still have some trouble making the eReferral system work for them. In general, it seems that problems are more likely when hardware specifications are at the low end, especially with server hardware. Investing in adequate hardware and Internet connectivity will have efficiency benefits for many functions other than eReferrals.

One click access for Medtech practices

Some practices are not aware that they can download and install an icon  for direct access to the eReferral forms without going through the Healthlink start page. This can be found on the CareConnect eReferral website under the “news” tab (see below).

Further developments in the pipeline

Work is progressing well on a process for sending amended or updated referrals, which will also include the ability to look up the status of an existing referral.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. We are at a very interesting stage of the project, and we value your support and feedback.

Contact details

CareConnect eReferral team: ereferrals@healthalliance.co.nz

Website: www.ereferrals.co.nz

Healthlink technical support: 0800 288 887 helpdesk@healthlink.net

GP advisor WDHB Kim Bannister: kim.bannister@waitematadhb.govt.nz

GP Liaison ADHB Jim Kriechbaum JimK@adhb.govt.nz

GP Liaison CM Health Helen Liley Helen.Liley@middlemore.co.nz