

Non New Zealand Residents - eligibility for publicly funded healthcare (non maternity)

There has been a usual summer increase in non-NZ residents presenting for health care - some are eligible for publicly funded health care, but some are not.

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board has a responsibility to identify those who are ineligible for free health care and recoup the costs - if the health board does not bill for these services, the tax payer meets the costs.

A couple of clarification points that have arisen recently:

- UK and Australia have reciprocal agreements to provide acute care for their residents; any elective services must be billed.
- Eligibility for medical (non-maternity) services is not affected by marital status - ie a person is not eligible for free health care simply because they are married to a New Zealand citizen. They must meet the eligibility criteria on their own merits.
- While the Bay of Plenty District Health Board has a policy of providing health care to all, regardless of ability to pay, bear in mind the costs involved when advising non-NZ residents. An ineligible non-NZ resident referred to ED, triaged, treated and discharged will generate a minimum fee of \$170.00 and can be considerably more.

Charges also apply to district nursing services so referrals need to note non-NZ residents and the patient must be advised that there will be a charge for district nursing visits so they have a choice of district nurse or general practitioner follow up. District nursing charges are set at \$75.00 per visit without consumables.

Hospital level care is NOT free to people who are ineligible for publicly funded care. For more information on eligibility refer to the web address www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility

Please contact ACC Manager, Jayne Emerson, on 07 579 8066, email jayne.emerson@bopdhb.govt.nz or Elaine Secker on 07 306 0841, email elaine.secker@bopdhb.govt.nz for further information.



Should GP's do VEs for Menorrhagia?

This interesting question has arisen in another health board as the result of a review of all referral letters sent in for menorrhagia. About 20% of these letters did not have any mention about whether the VE had been performed. GP Liaisons across the country have been debating the issue and here is a consensus view - yes, they should.

However, if your patient is going to see a gynaecologist within a couple of weeks for a second opinion, there is a case for deferring this examination to the gynaecologist.

So, should GPs be doing PRs for appendicitis?

PHIL SHOEMACK back from Canada

I spent from August till December last year in Canada as part of a job swap arrangement with Dr Paul Martiquet, a Medical Officer of Health colleague from the Sunshine Coast, just north of Vancouver. We lived in Paul's wonderful house looking out across the Straights of Georgia at Vancouver Island while he and his family were here in our home. Impressions: public health issues are pretty much the same as here but Canada is a more affluent country and spends about 50% more per head on health than we do. People (including doctors) still complain about the same old issues though, like waiting times, lack of finance, inefficient administration, staff shortages etc. The more things change, the more things stay the same!

Phil Shoemack
Medical Officer of Health



Moving On...

Mr Rob Cable will be known to many of you. He has been a senior surgeon at Tauranga Hospital for many years and has made major valuable and innovative contributions to the ongoing development of both the general and vascular service for the organisation. He leaves the Bay of Plenty District Health Board on 10 March 2006, but will continue consulting from his private rooms.

Dr Sharon Kletchko leaves the Bay of Plenty District Health Board to join Nelson Marlborough District Health Board in the role of General Manager Planning and Funding, and will also be in a national role as Chief Quality Advisor to the Ministry of Health as a part-time secondment.

UPDATE FROM ELECTIVE SERVICES

To assist in providing the Bay of Plenty population with regional equity to public hospital services, it has been decided to offer a regional service for Neurology. This means that all neurology referrals will be graded by a neurologist at Tauranga Hospital, and, if accepted, added to a regional waiting list. Clinics will then be booked from Tauranga Hospital by highest priority/longest wait. This means that although most Whakatane patients will be seen in clinics at Whakatane Hospital, if a more urgent appointment is required and the closest appointment available is in Tauranga, Whakatane patients may be offered a clinic at Tauranga Hospital.

It is planned to make Dermatology a regional service in April 2006.

During December, January and February extra Gastroenterology lists were carried out at Whakatane Hospital to treat long wait patients on the Tauranga gastroenterology treatment list. Around 200 patients were treated during this time.

There have been some returns of Plastics low-priority first specialist assessment (FSA) referrals recently. As you will be aware, Grade 3 referrals for this service will no longer be accepted at this health board. Just a reminder that the Bay of Plenty District Health Board has a limited visiting Plastic Surgery service consisting of two outpatient clinics and two theatre sessions a month.

Gynaecology clinics are running in Te Puke for Tauranga patients wishing to see Whakatane specialists. A comparison of wait times is as follows.

Dale Shewan and Kathie Sale, Elective Services Team
Phone 07 579 8219 or email dale.shewan@bopdhb.govt.nz

GYNAECOLOGY TAURANGA		GYNAECOLOGY WHAKATANE	
<i>1st Specialist Assessments</i>	<i>Wait Times</i>	<i>1st Specialist Assessments</i>	<i>Wait Times</i>
Waiting priority 1	next clinic	Waiting priority 1	next clinic
Waiting priority 2	up to 20 wks	Waiting priority 2	within 4 wks
Waiting priority 3A	up to 6 mths	Waiting priority 3	within 6 mths
Waiting priority 3B	never	Waiting priority 4	within 52 wks
Waiting priority 4	never		
<i>Treatment List</i>		<i>Treatment List</i>	
Waiting priority 1	next list	Waiting priority 1	next list
Waiting priority 2	next list	Waiting priority 2	2-4 wks
Waiting priority 3	12 mths	Waiting priority 3	6-8 mths
Waiting priority 4	not doing	Waiting priority 4	not doing

IMMUNISATION CONTRAINDICATIONS

Bay of Plenty District Health Board continues to see children who are incompletely immunised, in some cases apparently from medical advice.

Please note that the following are NOT CONTRAINDICATIONS to immunisation:

- asthma/eczema/hay fever
- antibiotic treatment
- coughs and colds UNLESS child is febrile or ill.

For further information contact Clinical Director of Paediatrics, Dr Chris Moyes, email chris.moyes@bopdhb.govt.nz



CANINE communication

A dog goes to the post office.

"I'd like to send a telegram," he says to the postmaster.

"Certainly, sir, what would you like the telegram to say," says the postmaster.

"Well, I'd like it to say WOOF, WOOF, WOOF," says the dog.

"Hmm," the postmaster says, "Normally that would be \$1.00 a word and would cost you \$3.00. But today, we have a special promotion and you could send seven words for the price of three"

"So then, the postmaster continues, "You could send WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF for the same price as WOOF, WOOF, WOOF!"

"Really?" says the dog.

"Yes, really," says the postmaster.

The dog thinks for a moment and is puzzled.

"But," says the dog, "The only problem is that wouldn't make any sense."



PANDEMIC UPDATE

Remember you can access up-to-date pandemic influenza information via www.bopdhb.govt.nz

In addition you can register for a monthly update by emailing sarah.gorringe@bopdhb.govt.nz