

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Welcome to the January 2006 edition. I hope you have had, or are planning, a relaxing summer break and taking time to re charge and spend time with your friends and family.

January sees me returning temporarily to GP locums, so that someone at least will be following this advice! I will still be doing some liaison work and will be available half a day per week until mid February when I will return to almost full time.

This year sees the final phase of the Ministry of Health's waiting list plans. Essentially this means that patients who are likely to wait longer than six months for either a second opinion or treatment will be returned to you for ongoing care.



GP Liaison - Andy Humphrey

No doubt you have an opinion about this, please email me at andy.humphrey@bopdhb.govt.nz



E - REFERRALS

Bay of Plenty District Health Board currently operates a system for accepting non-acute referrals electronically.

As a result electronic referrals from GP's are being processed by both Tauranga and Whakatane hospitals for a number of clinical services.

During the six-month period from April until September 2005, a total of 3794 referrals were received and processed. This equated to approximately 37% of all referrals.

The benefits of using e-referrals are:

- time savings - both from the GP end and during postage
- referrals are captured into a database
- automatic acknowledgement that the hospital has received the referral.

Clinical Systems Project Manager, Lois Cubis, explains that a referral template is used so that essential information only is captured.

"This does require a certain amount of set-up for each GP practice to complete. Also to note is that at this point in time, we are unable to accept urgent acute referrals or referrals for radiology," says Lois.

A further project is under way to look into a more complete referral management system.

Notifiable Disease Alerts

Bay of Plenty District Health Board can now accept disease alerts for the Medical Officer of Health electronically. This requires a similar set up to the e-referrals.

If your practice wishes to use these facilities then please contact Clinical Systems Project Manager, Lois Cubis, on 07 579 8437.



MEDICAL DIRECTOR ACCEPTS CHALLENGE

John Kyngdon has recently accepted the challenge of Medical Director for the Bay of Plenty District Health Board. He is a vocationally registered general and vascular surgeon.



Medical Director - John Kyngdon

Having completed training in New Zealand and serving on various committees John is currently on the New Zealand Surgical Board.

He was a house surgeon in Tauranga and thought he would return one day.

"After Tauranga, I travelled a bit (across Africa in a landrover), worked in London and then came back to the Wellington Surgical Training Scheme. I then returned to Norwich as a Commonwealth Fellow for two years and have since worked in public and private in Gisborne," says John.

"I doubt that I will be able to totally give up public hospital clinical work, and I intend to start in a small way next year and help out where possible."

With his wife Jan, he has several offspring. His other interests include diving and game fishing.

PATHS Pilot Update

PATHS (Providing Access To Health Solutions) is a project designed to give assistance to patients who are on the sickness benefit or invalids benefit and who wish to return to work. There has been a substantial increase in the payment to GP's, from \$45.00 to \$119.45.

This is to cover the initial GP medical report and then to view and approve the health and wellness report. In some cases, patients on the sickness benefit don't have a regular GP. In other pilots one approach has been to fully fund several GP visits, and the Tauranga area is looking at this option.

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board is trying to streamline GP involvement where possible. Please direct all comments and feedback via email andy.humphrey@bopdhb.govt.nz



Work and Income Regional Commissioner Carl Crafar, Social Development and Employment Minister Steve Maharey, Bay of Plenty District Health Board Chairperson Mary Hackett and Pacific Health Chief Operating Officer Graham Dyer celebrate the launch of PATHS

Medical Admission & Planning Unit

The Medical Admission and Planning Unit (MAPU) opened in August last year in an attempt to improve the care of patients, and the efficiency of running the acute medical service at Tauranga Hospital. Based on the Paisley Model (named after the Scottish physician who first described the process), it aims to place almost all acute admissions through a dedicated area where investigations can be fast tracked and treatment initiated. If possible, patients are discharged directly from the unit home. If the likely length of stay is greater than 36 hours the patients are transferred to an inpatient bed for ongoing care.

The unit is opening in stages. The current first stage is having all the patients in the same ward and fast tracking investigations to allow early treatment and discharge. Already, there has been a drop in length of stay of 11.5%. Subsequent stages will allow GP referrals directly to the unit, with patients only being triaged in the emergency department. The final stage will be a purpose built unit next to the emergency department, and will encompass all adult acute admissions, except maternity and psychiatry.

We hope primary care will eventually see the following benefits:

- Patients who chose to see a GP first will effectively bypass the emergency department, unless sick enough to need resuscitation.
- This will improve the patient's experience and be an incentive to consult with you first.
- The electronic discharge summaries will be completed as the patient leaves, thereby keeping you informed.

Having experienced the unit for several months, we would welcome any feedback as we are planning to refine and develop the unit as time goes by.

Dr Adrian Claydon
Physician and Gastroenterologist
adrian.claydon@bopdhb.govt.nz

Welcome Back Dr Rodger Roos

Dr Roos has returned as a locum physician and will not be doing any private work. He has returned to New Zealand to cover for a vacancy in geriatrics, and will be here until June 2006. His training is in general internal medicine, but he has special interest in endocrinology and rheumatology.

Dr Roos has worked in the United States for 14 years and as a general internist in Guam for two years. In 2001 he spent time in Tauranga as a consultant for one of the medical admitting services and covering the endocrine and diabetes services. He has also spent some time teaching and practicing in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and Uganda.

His interests include hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, rafting, gardening, and overseas travel. He is also passionate about environmental issues and interested in history. Dr Roos is married with two grown children.

PANDEMIC UPDATE

As they share the same Medical Officer of Health, the Bay of Plenty and Lakes District Health Board's have joined forces to produce a draft pandemic plan. This is now available online at <http://www.bopdhb.govt.nz>

In addition there are pamphlets available upon request, which are aimed informing the general public. If you wish to receive fortnightly updates or would like to order some pamphlets please email sarah.gorringe@bopdhb.govt.nz

GP meetings are planned for the near future.



Emergency Planner Andrew Keenan and Te Ora Public Health Media Coordinator Sarah Gorringe prepare for an emergency.

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