

E-Referrals Collaboration Produces a Winning Result

Dear Colleagues,
Perhaps only once in a decade do we see an IT enabled business solution appear in the health sector with the potential to fundamentally change the healthcare delivery paradigm. I believe we are seeing such a technology arriving now in the form of e-Referrals, in particular the online e-Referrals project that is currently being implemented at Hutt Valley DHB.



An Electronic Process End to End

Please consider the sheer efficiency of having all local GPs able to download a referral form into their practice management system (from any of a number of DHB inpatient or outpatient services). The referral form is pre-populated with a lot of information, and allows attachments, such as, lab results to be added to the referral. Once completed it is sent directly to the DHB, where the information is imported into the hospital's clinical information system. Upon receipt at the DHB an electronic acknowledgement is sent to the referrer. Referrers' also receive status update information electronically within their PMS to indicate the progress of the referral within the DHB, e.g. booking notification etc. It is a truly integrated, paperless referral process.

The Value of Collaboration

After two years of collaborative development activity between Hutt Valley DHB, HealthLink and leading practice management system vendor Medtech, the new e-Referrals system is now live and in use by 23 out of 28 of the DHB's services. The system has recently been expanded and this will continue until it is used across all of the DHB's services.

The Benefits are Significant

There are benefits to every party in the referral process; the GP is able to produce a completely paperless referral and get rapid feedback, once again paperless, from the hospital's computer system. The hospital departments are able to spell out exactly what they are looking for by using 'service customised' forms to guide the referrers and assist them to provide the information needed to accompany the referral. The referral is received in a form in which it can be automatically inserted into the hospital's information system. And of course the patient receives faster, more efficient care and benefits at every turn from the seamless **exchange** of accurate information between referrer and hospital.

An Overview of the System

Following is a simplified diagram illustrating the e-Referral process.

ISSUE # 3
September 2007

In This Issue...

E-Referrals
Collaboration Produces
a Winning Result

An Electronic Process
End to End

The Value of
Collaboration

The Benefits are
Significant

An Overview of the
System

HISAC Sponsorship -
Key to Success

Standards Based and
Future-proof

Available Across a
Wide Range of End-
user Systems

What do the Users
Have to Say?

In Conclusion

HealthLink is...

- ✓ Secure
- ✓ Efficient
- ✓ Integrated
- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Innovative
- ✓ Reliable

Download our brochures...

[Clinical
Communications within
the Australian Health
Sector](#)

[HealthLink Company
Profile](#)

[Is Paperless General
Practice Becoming a
Reality?](#)

[A Complete Guide to
HealthLink Services](#)

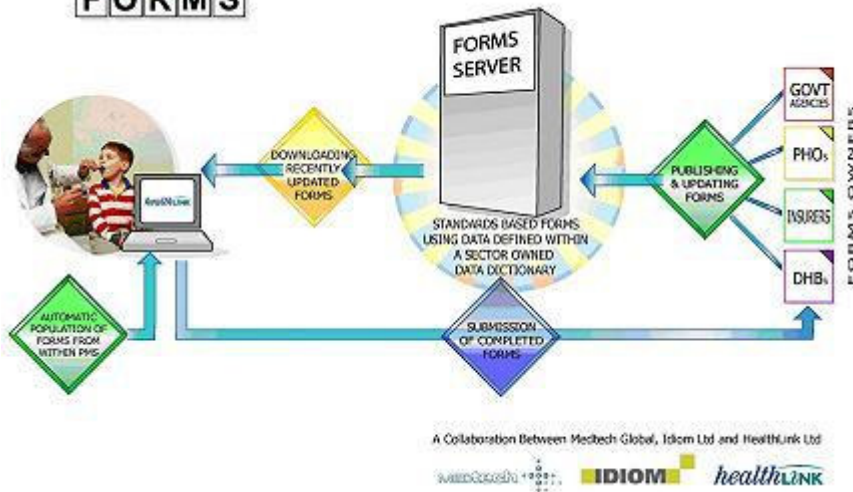
Contact us...

[Tom Bowden](#)
CEO

[Bhavesh Daya](#)
HealthLink Technical
Partners

[Brad Smith](#)
Support Manager

FORMS



At HealthLink we are very excited about the opportunities afforded by using this new technology. It is especially gratifying to see two years of hard work yielding a system that will clearly be so profoundly useful to the New Zealand health sector.

HealthLink's project manager Mike Donnelly has been temporarily seconded to take the helm at Hutt Valley DHB and to move the system across into full production. Mike has played a pivotal role as HealthLink's project manager for the past year and he has displayed outstanding skill and tenacity over this time.

HISAC Sponsorship - Key to Success

The Hutt Valley DHB e-Referrals initiative is viewed by HISAC (The New Zealand Health Sector's Health Information Strategy Action Committee) as an example of sector collaboration delivering nationally relevant and scaleable e-health solutions. HISAC is a Ministerial Committee formed to provide governance of, oversight of, and leadership for the implementation of the Health Information Strategy for New Zealand and HISAC's support has made a significant difference to the level of commitment and support for this project across the sector.

"HISAC is supportive of the Hutt Valley e-Referrals project as an example of an e-Referrals system that could be used across the country, which is consistent with HISAC's philosophy of the sector developing solutions once and deploying them as widely as possible. New Zealand will only maintain its international leadership in the e-health field if it is able to build on collaborative projects such as this one. HISAC is very pleased to have played a "watching" role in supporting the e-Referrals project and will promote the benefits of this initiative across the country. Of particular benefit was the opportunity to have a sector "project" developed concurrently with the required Health Information Standards Organisation (HISO) standards consideration process. This significantly improved the quality and practicality of the resulting standards and HISAC and HISO have agreed that this approach will be used in future development of standards."
HISAC Chairman Paul Cressey

Standards Based and Future-proof

The e-Referrals consortium has been working closely with the Health Information Standards Organisation (HISO) to develop a set of standards that can be used for development of a range of online services. "Working with HISO to develop a set of standards in parallel with a project such as this is a very efficient way in which to work" says Dr Edwin Ng, HealthLink's Chief Technology Officer. "It means that the technical standards developed actually do work in a live setting. If necessary the draft standards can be adjusted or modified as the technology is developed and tested" he says.

Available Across a Wide Range of End-user Systems

Leading practice management system provider Medtech has played an important role in developing the e-Referrals system. Because Medtech is the provider of choice for GPs in the Hutt Valley, it was logical to have them involved and they have played a very active role in the project. Ultimately the system will be able to be used by all practice management system vendors and a number of them have already begun developing an e-Referral capability.

What do the Users Have to Say?

Fact file...

HealthLink systems are used to exchange more than 50 million items of clinical information annually

HealthLink is a world leader in the development of electronic referrals and discharge summary systems

HealthLink strictly enforces and supports use of health IT standards

HealthLink uses electronic signatures to correctly identify the senders or requesters of information

More than 8,000 healthcare provider organisations across New Zealand and Australia use HealthLink

More at HealthLink...

If there is someone who you think would be interested in receiving Connectivity, please ask them to [contact us](#) or pass on their details.



To provide a more detailed understanding of the profound importance of the e-Referrals system, we have assembled comments from a number of the people who have been involved in the project from Hutt Valley DHB and from the Hutt Valley medical community...

Tony Cooke CIO

"A paper-based system to refer patients from primary care to a hospital is inefficient, time consuming and unreliable. Routinely either too much or too little information is sent and sometimes the information sent is of poor quality leading to rework and delays."

The electronic referrals system provides a more structured framework which improves the consistency and completeness of information for all parties; furthermore because the referral process is fully electronic, it can be tracked and monitored continuously - this improves the service for clinicians and patients alike."

Mr Brett Krause - Orthopaedic Consultant

The e-Referrals system improves the compliance of the GPs in providing the service specific data which assists the consultant's decision making. Also the referral is legible!"

Paul Leishman - Outpatient Physiotherapy Team Leader

The actual process of prioritising e-referrals is very simple and takes minimal time. I appreciate the extra information available from the GP, as often referrals sent to physiotherapy are below the minimum standard of information necessary to make an accurate clinical judgement of their priority."

Mark Austin - GP Manuka Health Centre

Congratulations to Hutt DHB for this project. Anything that reduces a GP's workload and makes the paperwork less hassle is welcome news to me!

Apart from the obvious convenience and timeliness of e-Referrals, the aspect that I think has great potential is the possibility to build into the template fields to accept all the relevant information that the receiver of the referral requires. This reduces the risk that a referral is bounced due to inadequate information or prioritized inappropriately. I look forward to further developments!"

Wendy Coulter - Administration - Support Therapies

"Practise makes perfect! The more I use e-Referrals the more confident I am with its layout and with helping others complete an amendment. The referrals are a lot more informative."

Sue White - Clinical Analyst e-Referrals Project Team

"The most satisfying aspect of this project has been watching the excitement of GPs, consultants and HVDHB staff as they realise the benefits of e-Referrals. The easy, seamless communication of patient information from GP practice to the hospital using service customised forms ensures the clinician has the best information available. Another bonus is the automatically generated update messages sent back to the GP patient and referrer's inbox's as the referral is processed at the hospital. This transparency of communication is exciting!"



In Conclusion:

We hope you will share our excitement in entering this new era of online hospital referrals. All over New Zealand we are seeing mounting enthusiasm for e-Referrals as the jungle drums have started to beat and interest is growing. We are currently working with DHBs across the country to look at regional implementations of e-Referrals.



Want Further Information

We have prepared some video clips, one showing the creation of a referral in the PMS system, another showing the processing of the referral at the DHB. If you would like to see these or you would like further information about the e-Referrals project, please contact Cornelius Dirven on 0800 288 887 ext 3740 or email him on Cornelius.dirven@healthlink.net.

In accordance with the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act we ask that if you do not wish to receive further e-newsletters from HealthLink that you reply to this email notifying us to this effect by [clicking here](#)

HealthLink Ltd.
Better Practice ~ Better Care

0800 288 887 | <http://www.healthlink.net/>

