

GP Liaison Newsletter

Keeping you informed August 2005

Spelling

One newsletter into my GP Liaison tenure and my lack of attention to spelling has been thoroughly exposed! Thanks to everyone who pointed out my serial misspelling of specialists' names in the last edition. To put the record straight our new visiting Gynaecologist is Dr Donoghue, not Donahue – perhaps the silent “G” is for Gynae. Also a big apology to Mr Tubb for pluralising him – there is, and always has been, only one Mr Tubb!

New Obstetric Specialists

Whilst on the subject of specialists it's really good news to announce that our impending obstetric crisis has been averted. With Ivan Popov heading off for a well earned two month holiday and Jeff Harrild's recent retirement obstetricians were looking a bit thin on the ground. However, it has recently been announced that two new O&G specialists will be arriving soon in Masterton for six month locum stints. We are expecting Dr Adrienne Moore from New York in late August and Dr Malati Potdar from Ohio in late October. The final dates are still pending Medical Council registration so I will keep you informed.

In the meantime obstetric cover will be provided on most days by short term locums, most of whom are from Middlemore Hospital, along with the continuing support we receive from MidCentral.

Minor surgery clinics

In an effort to reduce surgical operation waiting times a new Minor Surgery operating list has been created. Procedures will be performed by Dr John Auchincloss, a very experienced surgeon who is currently working in our Emergency Department. Dr Auchincloss is also very keen to accommodate any GP who would like to take up the opportunity to brush up on their minor surgery skills.

The Minor Ops list occurs weekly on a Thursday from 1pm till 4pm. Should anyone want to turn up and scrub in they are more than welcome. It might be a good idea to speak to Jan

Struthers in theatre first to ensure that there won't be too many of us on any one day.

To Be Heard



Led by Dr Rob Maunsell, clinical director for the project, the Wairarapa is about to be blessed with a new mental health service targeted at those patients with mild to moderate mental health conditions who find it difficult accessing GP services and whose needs are not currently being adequately met.

The service is taking advantage of targeted funding from the Ministry of Health and will be directed at providing wide-ranging mental health services for patients not currently catered for in Secondary Care and for whom Primary Care has not been adequately resourced. Primarily this will include Maori, Pacific Islanders and people on low incomes.

At the hub of the service will be a mental health co-ordinator. The co-ordinator's role will include advice to Primary Health providers, organising training, working with the patient to produce health plans and directing involvement with other community-based and para-medical services.

Training courses for GPs and practice nurses will be offered over the next few months and will be CME/MOPS registered.

“To Be Heard” will be officially launched during Mental Health week in October. Any further questions should be addressed to Dr Maunsell at robertmaunsell@mastertonmedical.co.nz

Red Cross Transport Scheme

The Red Cross has thrown a lifeline to patients with problems attending appointments owing to transport difficulties.



Transport to attend any health-related appointments can be arranged by calling the transport hotline 0800 WAIBUS (924287). The Red Cross have over 60 volunteer drivers keen to help out and have both mini-buses and private cars available. Trips to Wellington and the Hutt Valley can be arranged and group bookings in the mini bus are possible.

No fee is expected although a donation would be happily received from those who can afford it.

Electronic referral

Just time to give you a bit of advanced notice on a work-in-progress to commence electronic outpatient referral from Primary Care to Specialist Outpatients.

The plan is to create a generic referral form to cover all specialties and have it integrated into Medtech. From here the Primary Care provider will be able to create the letter by filling in the specified fields in the letter and sending it electronically to the Outpatient clerk.

As well as intending to speed up the time from referral to booking, it is hoped that by using a pro-forma the prioritisation of urgency should be more accurate. The pro-forma will be based on the Surgical Referral letter created by Mr Alan Shirley and Tim Baily-Gibson that has been previously trialed.

I am eager to hear any suggestions or comments about this plan, so please drop me a line on this or any other topics.

Farewells

A reminder that Dr Bornstein (Paediatrician) has sadly completed his 12 month contract and he and his family are returning to the States. He will be greatly missed. His replacement Dr John Hess, his wife Karen & two daughters arrive around the 14 September. Dr Hess has signed a three year contract.

The Hearing Association

I have been contacted by The Hearing Association in Masterton to remind you of their services.



They are a registered charity and have a wide range of funding sources. Along with offering free hearing tests they also have a Life Coach available to help patients and their families come to terms with hearing difficulties.

From their offices in the Gawith Burridge building in Queen Street, they also offer hearing aid repairs at cost price, with some repairs and cleaning possible on site.

For further information they can be contacted on 06 378 2948

Tours of the new hospital

Peter Clayton, Building and Property Services Manager at the DHB, is now taking small groups (maximum of 12) through the new hospital to show progress and explain what is planned. If you would like to join a tour there are two options coming up:

- Friday, August 26th at 12 noon
- Saturday, September 3 at 10am (especially for GPs)

Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested.

Email me at: simon@drsnook.net

Regards
Simon Snook

EXPECTED AVERAGE WAITING TIMES FOR FIRST SPECIALIST APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIVE SURGERY AT MASTERTON HOSPITAL AS AT 10 AUGUST 2005

Unforeseen events may cause waiting times to change so please use this information as a guide only

FIRST SPECIALIST APPOINTMENT

	Urgent	Semi-urgent	Routine
ENT	2-4 weeks	10 months	14 months
GENERAL SURGERY	2 weeks	3 months	6 months
GYNAECOLOGY	2-4 weeks	5 months	8 months
COLPOSCOPY <small>Total waiting includes planned repeat procedures</small>	4 weeks		6 months
ORTHOPAEDIC	2-4 weeks	4 months	9 months
OPHTHALMOLOGY	4 weeks	9 months	12 months
PLASTICS *	4 weeks	7 months	12 months
UROLOGY	2-4 weeks	8 months	10 months
MEDICAL	6 weeks	5 months <small>(Dr Scott 9 months)</small>	7 months
PAEDIATRIC	2-4 weeks	1 month	2 months

*Plastics is provided in the Wairarapa by the Hutt DHB
Waiting Time = time from receipt of referral at Masterton hospital to outpatient appointment

ELECTIVE SURGERY

	Urgent	Semi-urgent	Routine
ENT		4 months	10 months
GENERAL SURGERY	2 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
GYNAECOLOGY	2 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
ORTHOPAEDIC	3-4 months	6-8 months	12 months
OPHTHALMOLOGY	2 months	4 months	10 months
UROLOGY	4 weeks	8 weeks	2 months

Waiting Time = time from date of outpatient appointment to treatment