

HIGHLIGHTS

A regular update of news and initiatives from change making General Practices

NEWTOWN UNION HEALTH SERVICE MAKING ACCESS EASIER

Patients are finding it easier to access services at Newtown Union Health Service (NUHS) thanks to a streamlined telephony system and other early Health Care Home initiatives.

Learning from lean:

After a Kaizen 'learning lean' workshop, NUHS Manager Fiona Osten kept momentum going.

Staff developed a Lean action plan and made the following changes:

- Removed phones from reception to an adjacent non-patient contact admin area.
- De-cluttered areas by removing unused and surplus resources.
- Reviewed practice processes to remove any double-handling and wastages.
- Reduced stock levels to simplify their ordering process.

As a result of the telephony changes,

missed calls have dropped dramatically. There are fewer no-show appointments, drop-in patients and complaints. *Overall this means more quality time with patients and a better patient experience.*

Building on this success, further initiatives and upgrades are underway:

- The reception area is to be re-built with lean and Kaizen principles in mind.
- A new 'drop-in' triage area with a standing desk and consulting area is planned.
- Any excess paperwork is to be scanned and clutter removed to create a clear area to welcome patients.
- Visual boards are being utilised to manage the lean changes.

In terms of next steps; "we need to match patient expectations with what we can provide and we are now

looking at what lean efficiencies can be applied to 'on the day' services," says Fiona Osten.

Staff Involvement

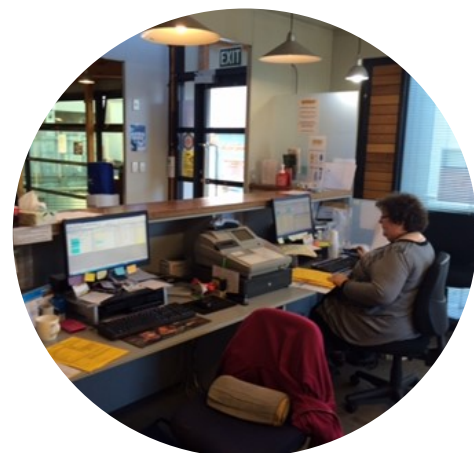
All staff have had input into the changes and have regular sessions where a room will be cleaned out, any excess paperwork and clutter removed or scanned. "We try to finish up with a fun quiz or group activity after our clean up sessions," says Michelle Curel, Operations Coordinator, to provide some light relief.

About NUHS

NUHS is a Very Low Cost Access service that provides health care for 6651 patients located in Newtown, Wellington.

"The reception area is now a quiet welcoming place where people can be seen immediately, without interruption from in-coming patient calls. This can be especially important when so many patients have English as a second language."

Fiona Osten – Manager, Newtown Union Health Centre



PHONE TRIAGE - RESULTS FROM NEWLANDS MEDICAL CENTRE

The Change

In March last year, Newlands Medical Centre introduced a new clinical phone triage system. Triage staff were increased to 3-4 nurses plus 1-3 doctors per day between 8 and 9am. Same day appointment availability was also increased. Patients asking for a same day appointment are passed to the triage staff to prioritise the urgency of the call. An appointment is assigned to the patient according to the nature of the call, either on the same day, on a later day or given advice or treatment over the phone.

Results

The following are results of a clinical triage audit conducted over a one week period from 03/08/2015 to 07/08/2015. 131 patients in this sample requested a same day appointment with a GP.

- 23% of same day appointment requests were able to be managed over the phone
- 58% were given a same day appointment with a GP, 4% with a nurse, and 14% were given an appointment on a later day
- There were no serious outcomes observed
- 48% of acute phone calls were related to respiratory disease, followed by 13% for skin problems
- Acute calls peaked on Monday (28%) and Tuesday (27%), and were even across the rest of the week
- 51% of calls were related to patients under 20 year of age
- The majority of acute calls were made between 8-9am (64%)

KARORI MEDICAL CENTRE & MANAGEMYPHEALTH



“Our all of practice portal approach means benefits can be discussed at many patient contact points by all of our staff”

- Dr Peter Moodie –
KMC

At Karori Medical Centre (KMC) over 50% of total enrolled patients can make appointments, request repeat prescriptions, access lab results, view patient notes and email their GP through ManageMyHealth.

The Numbers to end of June:

- KMC has 5026 activated portal based patients.
- Received 700 emails in June.
- Sent 900 emails in June.
- 1/3 of repeat prescriptions are now requested through ManageMyHealth.
- Both younger and older patients using the service regularly.

Managing incoming/outgoing emails

“It’s part of our everyday work and doesn’t take much time as responses are generally short and any complicated issues can be followed up with a visit or phone triage,” says KMC GP Jeff Lowe.

“We see the patient portal as an important tool to help free up capacity within the practice. The Health Care Home initiative is a big driver to helping us identify and operate in the most efficient and patient centric way within a rapidly changing general practice environment.”

“Our goal for portal usage is to get to 70%

activated users. At that level of engagement we would expect to see a significant reduction in calls in to the practice, increased patient satisfaction and use even less paper,” says Lyn Allen Practice Manager—KMC

5 top tips for practices

- Nominate a clinical champion to maintain momentum
- Develop a patient portal culture with a dedicated administrative resource talk about portal benefits
- Make incoming and outgoing portal mail part of everyday tasks, this can save time for both practice staff and patients
- Think about portal use as a tool to create and increase practice capacity
- Encourage open notes and secure messaging. This improves patient access and reduces error as the patient responds quickly and directly to the patient. An example; Dr Moodie encourages patients to let him know how they are feeling by sending him a secure message through the portal a few days after a consultation.