

It has been a busy year for general practice with some practices joining a PHO for the first time, and others committed to further development of their PHO – and 2005 is unlikely to be any more restful! So I hope everyone has a chance for some well deserved time off over the summer and a chance to recuperate and recharge the batteries ready for the challenges of the New Year.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone for their support, feedback and comment during the year.

1. Simply the Best!

The collaborative approach to the development of the Headache and TIA guidelines introduced earlier in the year has been recognised with a merit award in the DHB Simply the Best Awards. Hopefully the guidelines are proving practically useful for GPs. They will be evaluated early next year so any feedback would be valued.

2. GP Direct Line

Just a reminder that there is a dedicated line for GP calls to Waikato Hospital – 07 839 8676. This number is answered as a priority by the telephonists which can save valuable time on the phone.

3. Acute referrals

If you have discussed a referral with a speciality registrar prior to sending them up to the Emergency Department, please note on the fax/letter which speciality has been contacted, and preferably the registrar's name. If the referral is faxed without prior contact with the registrar, please indicate to which speciality the referral is directed. If the letter does not identify the speciality the patient will initially be assessed by emergency department staff. This could be an unnecessary extra step for the patient, which may delay treatment and contribute to delays in emergency department staff seeing other patients.

4. Community Services Referrals

A few referrals have been directed to acute services instead to community services. Just a friendly reminder that referrals for community services, which includes district nurse, community physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietician, social worker, public health nurse and incontinence advisor, should be sent to the Community Services Regional Referral Centre fax 0800 867 333. For queries their phone number is 07 838 3565.

5. Welcome to

Martyn Harvey, emergency department specialist. Martyn is Tauranga born and trained in Auckland. After his earlier clinical years, spent in Auckland and Hamilton, Martyn crossed the ditch with his wife for 2 years at Monash Medical Centre, Melbourne, returning with 2 Australian born souvenirs. When he's

not being paternal, Martyn enjoys mountain biking and carpentry.

Clarke Parrish, general physician Waikato and Taumarunui. Clarke joins us for 6 months from Bellingham, in Washington State, where he is part of a 50 member multi-specialty medical group (including Jim Troutman who recently spent some time with us at Thames hospital). He is here with partner Tina Cummings and her 11 year old daughter Lauren. They hope to do a lot of tramping while here. Clarke also loves tennis and would enjoy the chance to play while here.

6. Earn 40 CME points in your pyjamas

Introducing iCOMET - a new way of earning CME points without having to leave home. Developed by the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) at the University of Auckland, this web-based education programme consists of short modules and is designed to allow GPs to earn Continuing Medical Education (CME) points without having to give up their valuable time to attend sessions.

The programmes have been expertly designed, peer reviewed and presented by IMAC. The first available online course is an Immunisation Education Programme and it is envisaged that other interactive web-based training modules will be added, including a Vaccinator Training Course for practice nurses and Meningococcal B and Influenza modules.

Completing the New Zealand GP Immunisation Education Programme will earn 40 CME points plus give GPs:

Access to IMAC's most requested resources from their 0800 line; Resources for maximising immunisation coverage within a practice; and Parent-focused articles to assist with explaining the effectiveness of immunisation.

Over 200 GPs have already registered with iCOMET and so far, IMAC has been overwhelmed by positive feedback.

IMAC has funding for a limited number of seats so register now to secure your place. Registration is via the website www.icomet.org.nz, takes five minutes and gives users an ongoing password to access member-only parts of the website creating time savings at future logins.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

Clinic	Category	Waiting Time
Audiology	Children 9-32 mths Under 17 years Children's hearing aids Adult diagnostic tests Adult hearing aids Central auditory processing test	2 months 2-3 months 4 weeks 4 months 6 months 12 months
Breast Care	Urgent Semi-urgent *BCC Imaging	3 weeks 10-12 months 2 weeks
Cardiac Surgery	Urgent Semi-urgent	1-3 weeks 3-6 weeks
Cardiology	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	1-4 weeks 12 weeks 24 months
Colposcopy	Invasive High grade Low grade Non cervical	Within 7 days 4 weeks 26 weeks + 26 weeks +
Dental	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	24 hours 3 weeks 2 months
Dermatology (1) Fax urgent referrals to 07 839 8670	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	24 hours 6 weeks 6 months
Paediatric Dermatology		7 months
Hands		2 months
Dermatology Lesion Clinic	Urgent Routine	24 hours 6 months
Diabetes Consultant (2)	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	3-4 months 5-6 months 6 months +
Diabetes Nurse Educator	Urgent Semi-urgent	Within 7 days Within 6 weeks
Endocrinology	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	1-4 weeks 8-9 months 3 years
Endoscopy/Colonoscopy Medical	Urgent Semi-Urgent	4-6 weeks 4-6 weeks
Surgical	Urgent Semi-urgent	4-6 weeks 24 months
ENT	Urgent Semi-urgent (children) Semi-urgent (adults)	1-3 weeks Up to 6 months Up to 8 months
Gastro-enterology	Urgent Semi-urgent	6-8 weeks 12 months
General Medicine	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	1-2 weeks 4 weeks 5 months
General Surgery	Urgent Semi urgent Routine	1-4 weeks 2-6 months 12-18 months
Gynaecology	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	2 weeks 3 months 6-7 months
Haematology	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine DVT	3 weeks 6-8 weeks 12 weeks 12 months
Maxillo-facial	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	Within 24 hours Within 1 week 2 months
Neurology	Urgent Semi-urgent Nerve Conduction Studies (routine) EEG (routine)	3 weeks 6 months 12 months 2-3 weeks

Clinic	Category	Waiting Time
Oncology (medical and radiation) Medical	Priority 1 Priority 2 Priority 3	1-2 days 5-10 working days 45-55 working days
Radiation	Priority 1 Priority 2 Priority 3	1-2 days 5-10 working days 20-25 working days
Ophthalmology	Urgent Urgent laser Semi-urgent – Children Semi-urgent – Adults Semi-urgent (diabetic)	1 month 1-3 weeks 7 months 13 months 5 months
Orthopaedic	General Back pain Paediatrics Paediatric Gait Clinic	Under 6 months Up to 8 months Up to 7 months 1-4 weeks
Paediatric Medicine	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	2-3 weeks 2 months 2-3 months
Paediatric Surgical	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	1 week Within 2 weeks 3 weeks
Pain clinic	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	Up to 3 months Up to 5 months 6 months
Physiotherapy	General musculoskeletal Respiratory Rheumatology Women's Health	5 days (urgent) 6-8 weeks (routine) 2-3 weeks 4 weeks 2 days (urgent) 2-3 weeks (routine)
Plastics (1) Fax immediate/acute referrals to 07 839 8725	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	2 weeks 3 months 6 months +
Plastics Lesion clinic	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	2 weeks 3 months 6 months +
Rehabilitation	Day Clinic	1-3 weeks
Renal	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	1-6 weeks 6 weeks to 6 mths 6 months +
Respiratory	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	2-4 weeks 2-6 weeks 6-8 weeks
Rheumatology (3)	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	4 weeks 3 months 6 months
Thyroid	Urgent Semi-Urgent Routine	2-4 weeks 4 months 2 years +
Ultrasound	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	2 weeks 7-8 months 12-15 months
Urology		Within 2 months
Vascular Laboratory	Urgent	Within 2 weeks
Vascular Surgery	Urgent Semi-urgent Routine	1-4 weeks 2-4 months 4-6 months
Adult Mental Health Waiting Times		
Community mental health team	Crisis referrals Non-crisis/routine	Within 24 hours Within 10 days

- 1 Immediate & urgent dermatology/plastics cases must be discussed with the specialist or registrar to allow appropriate prioritisation.
- 2 All urgent diabetes referrals can be seen on the same day.
- 3 All urgent rheumatology cases should be discussed with the rheumatologist.
- 4 Carotid studies are now being done by the vascular laboratory.
- 5 OPTHALMOLOGY - PLEASE NOTE FAXED REFERRALS ARE NOT ACCEPTED UNLESS THE PATIENT IS ACUTE AND YOU HAVE DISCUSSED THE CASE WITH THE REGISTRAR. ON YOUR ACUTE FAX REFERRAL PLEASE ADVISE THE NAME OF THE DOCTOR WITH WHOM YOU DISCUSSED THE CASE.