

### **1. New Thames Day Unit Opens**

The Thames Day Unit was recently officially opened by the WDHB chairperson, Michael Ludbrook. The facility has been developed specifically to meet the needs of adults and children who come to Thames Hospital for day procedures. The facility has a refurbished waiting area and reception facilities, pre-admission nurse and a team of 4 nurses to manage the weekly day procedures. The endoscopy unit, in greatly improved surroundings, is part of the new facility on one floor with other patients travelling up to the floor above for surgical procedures

In addition to the environmental changes, the processes on the day have been refined with a focus on ensuring better patient information.

### **2. New Streamlined Process for Cataract Patients**

Enclosed with this edition of Outreach is a letter from the Ophthalmology Department of Waikato Hospital about their new process for dealing with cataract referrals. They have decided to accept some patients directly to their waiting list on the basis of the referral information.

Currently many of the referrals come from the optometric community and often contain all the information that is needed to make a judgement about suitability for cataract surgery. Patients will therefore be accepted straight onto the waiting list where the referral information is sufficiently comprehensive following an optometrist assessment. This has the great advantage of short-cutting the system and resolving the need for patients to wait many months in order to see an ophthalmologist just to start the waiting list process. The Ophthalmology Service hopes that this new pathway will streamline the cataract referral process and free up many first specialist appointment places for other patients.

In essence, from the general practice point of view, it will mean that you may choose to direct patients to their local optometrist rather than to the Eye Clinic for initial assessment. The optometrist will then directly refer to the ophthalmology department as appropriate. Since the patient will have to fund the optometrist visit you will still have the option of referring patients in the traditional manner but it may involve a longer wait than those who are admitted directly to the waiting list following optometrist assessment.

Please direct any enquiries to Dr John Dickson, Clinical Director of the Ophthalmology Department.

### **3. Getting the Best Out of the Waikato Hospital Acute Referral Process**

To help avoid any confusion when a patient arrives at the Emergency Department it is extremely

helpful to state clearly on the referral letter which speciality registrar the patient has been discussed with. Please also indicate on the letter if you have had to leave a voicemail message.

### **4. Opening of Neurosurgery Unit**

Waikato Hospital's long-awaited neurosurgical unit was formally opened by the Minister of Health Pete Hodgson on June 15. Led by clinical director Mr Venkatamaran Balakrishnan, the service will initially have two neurosurgeons, 13 nurses, and a team of dedicated allied health staff including physiotherapists, social workers, pharmacists, and occupational therapists. In time, the team will have 3 neurosurgeons and a number of other medical positions, and a full complement of 21 nurses.

Over the past few months, neurosurgical outpatients have been progressively transferred from the care of Auckland to Waikato.

Initially, the unit will be accepting relatively straightforward cases only. Until the third neurosurgeon starts work later this year, acute and complex patients will continue to go to Auckland. Even once the unit is at full capacity, a small number of patients will remain under the care of the Auckland neurosurgeons due to the sub-specialty nature of their ongoing treatment.

Outpatient referrals to the newly established neurosurgery service should be addressed to Neurosurgery Service, Waikato Hospital. Until the unit is ready to provide an acute service, please direct acute referrals to the general surgical service or the emergency department.

### **5. Welcome to...**

**Thirayan Muthu**, neurosurgeon. Thirayan qualified in Neurosurgery in India in 1992 and, after further training in Ireland and the UK, obtained his Fellowship in Neurosurgery in the UK. He says he is a general neurosurgeon with a special interest in neuro-vascular surgery, cervical spine surgery, pituitary surgery, glioma surgery and, in fact, all aspects of neurosurgery.

**Anthony Yung**, dermatologist. Anthony is delighted to be back in the Waikato and to catch up with old friends and acquaintances. He trained in Dunedin then spent the most of his house officer and medical registrar years at Waikato Hospital, before joining the dermatology advanced trainee programme in Waikato and Auckland. He enjoyed a further 5.5 years in Leeds, UK where he had a broad exposure to all the dermatological subspecialties.

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

Clinic	Category	Waiting Time
Oncology and Medical	Priority 1	1-2 days
	Priority 2	5-10 working days
	Priority 3	20-30 working days
	Priority 1	1-2 days
	Priority 2	5-10 working days
Radiation	Priority 3	35-40 working days
Ophthalmology	Urgent	1 month
	Urgent laser	1-3 weeks
	Semi-urgent – Children	6 months
	Semi-urgent – Adults	11 months
	Semi-urgent (diabetic) Minor Operation Clinic	1 month 12 months
Orthopaedic	General – Urgent	1-6 weeks
	Semi-urgent	Up to 3 months
	Routine	Up to 6 months
	Paediatrics – Urgent	1-6 weeks
	Semi-urgent	Up to 4 months
	Routine	Up to 6 months
	Paediatric Gait Clinic	1-6 weeks
Paediatric Medicine	Urgent	3-4 weeks
	Semi-urgent	2 months
	Routine	2-3 months
Paediatric Surgical	Urgent	1 week
	Semi-urgent	Within 2 weeks
	Routine	3 weeks
Pain clinic	Urgent	Up to 3 months
	Semi-urgent	Up to 5 months
	Routine	6 months
Physiotherapy	General musculoskeletal	5 days (urgent) 6-8 weeks (routine) 2-3 weeks
	Respiratory	4 weeks
	Rheumatology	2 days (urgent)
	Women's Health	2-3 weeks (routine)
Plastics (1) Fax immediate/acute referrals to 07 839 8670	Urgent	2 weeks
	Semi-urgent	4 months
	Routine	6 months +
Plastics Lesion clinic	Urgent	2 weeks
	Semi-urgent	4 months
	Routine	6 months +
Rehabilitation	Day Clinic (Physio Only)	1-3 weeks
Renal	Urgent	1-4 weeks
	Semi-urgent	2-4 months
	Routine	4-6 months
Respiratory	Urgent	1-4 weeks
	Semi-urgent	1-2 months
	Routine	4-6 months
Rheumatology (3)	Urgent	1-4 weeks
	Semi-urgent	1-2 months
	Routine	2-4 months
Thyroid	Urgent	2-4 weeks
	Semi-Urgent	4 months
	Routine	4-6 months
Ultrasound	Urgent	1-2 weeks
	Semi-urgent	1-3 months
	Routine	3-6 months
Urology		Within 2 months
Vascular	Urgent	1-4 weeks
Vascular Surgery	Urgent	1-4 weeks
	Semi-urgent	2-4 months
	Routine	4-6 months
<b>Adult Mental Health Waiting Times</b>		
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 OPHTHALMOLOGY – 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.

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June 2006