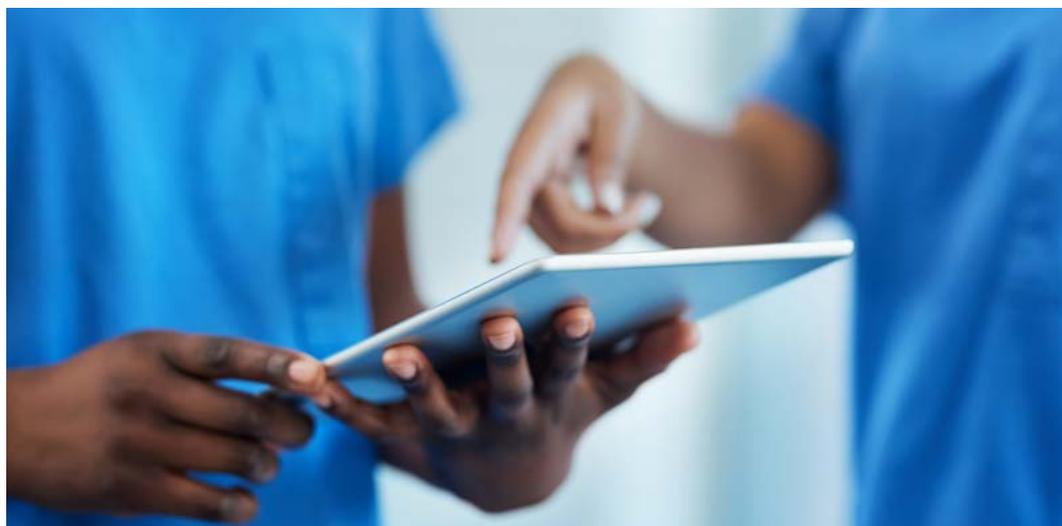# Auckland region
uses electronic system
to **streamline referrals** &
improve communication
**between healthcare
providers**

Orion Health Case Study

AUCKLAND REGION DISTRICT HEALTH BOARDS:

- Auckland DHB
- Waitemata DHB
- Counties Manukau DHB

New Zealand

www.calindex.org

Organisation Type	District Health Board
Population	Over 1.5 million
Products Implemented	Orion Health Clinical Referrals
Key Benefits	• Increased legibility, relevance and accuracy of referral information. • Improved communication between healthcare providers • Reduction in duplicated or missing referrals • Reduction in referral processing time and administrative overhead • Improved clinical decision making

The Orion Health Referrals solution enables the **electronic receipt, processing**, and triage of referrals in the secondary care setting, once received from primary care within the hospital's clinical workstation.

The Customer

The three District Health Boards (DHBs) of the Auckland region – Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata - together serve over 1.5 million people.

Each DHB has particular areas of specialty and population profiles. This, in conjunction with the close proximity of the DHBs, means there is a large amount of migration and crossover of patients as they move between providers.

The Challenge

Referrals are a critical component of a patient's health journey, enabling clinicians to collaborate with other care providers to provide the patient with the right care, within the right timeframe.

The use of faxed and mailed referral letters from GPs, specialists and community health providers results in referral processes that are non-standardised and can create confusion with high volumes of rework by both primary and secondary care personnel. Paper-based referrals have high administrative costs and reduce the ability to leverage existing online resources. In the worst case scenarios, they can be misplaced or lost, and could endanger the life of a patient.

Given the high number of referrals between DHBs and health providers across Auckland, there was a need to implement an electronic system that could improve communication and processing time. Moving from a paper-based referral system to one managed electronically would enable improved patient flow and inte-grated care.

The Solution

The CareConnect eReferral project was established in 2012, through a collaborative effort between the three DHBs, the regional shared service agency (healthAlliance), primary care (HealthLink) and Orion Health.

This project was designed to improve the quality of care by implementing an electronic referrals management system between primary and secondary care providers across the Auckland region. The project was divided into three separate implementation phases to minimise risk and maximise the realisation of benefits in a timely fashion.

Phase One

Concerned the implementation of electronic referrals from GPs where the referrals were received and acknowledged electronically, then subsequently printed and processed as faxed referrals.

Phase Two

Concerned the implementation of the Referral Management System for the electronic processing of GP referrals.

Phase Three

Concerns the implementation of DHB elective referrals both within and between hospitals. The Orion Health Referrals solution enables the electronic receipt, processing, and triage of referrals in the secondary care setting, once received from primary care within the hospital's clinical workstation.

Referrals within the hospital are fully integrated in the clinical record, allowing users to view the referral within the clinical workstation, and manage the referral workflow while in patient context.

Referral status updates can also be messaged back to primary care referrers, keeping them better informed and providing confidence about the status of their patient referrals. Reporting functionalities in the system allow for referral volumes, turnaround times and outliers to be highlighted and analysed, resulting in system improvements.

The speed of processing time means greater surety that patient handover has occurred. And the instant advice received back to the primary provider often results in the patient not having to visit hospital – **benefiting the patient, the primary care providers and reducing load on the hospital.**

DR LARA HOPLEY,
Specialist Anaesthetist,
Waitemata DHB

The Results

By integrating information across the whole health system, standardising referral templates, and simplifying workflows, healthcare providers can immediately view relevant referral information, reducing duplication and errors.

Referrals now have improved legibility, completeness and accuracy, and there has been a reduction in errors that previously occurred, this was due in part to missing information or lost referrals. It now takes less time to process a referral, which provides the opportunity for clinical advice to be given, at times immediately. This has resulted in a reduction of hospital admissions.

By being fully integrated into the clinical record there has been an improvement in clinical decision making and an increase in specific clinical advice to the primary care provider.

- Over 1.3 million electronic referrals received to date
- Over 2000 referrals received in a single day, on average close to 45,000 per month
- Currently over 90% of all referrals from GPs are being received electronically, with the goal of being 100% electronic in sight
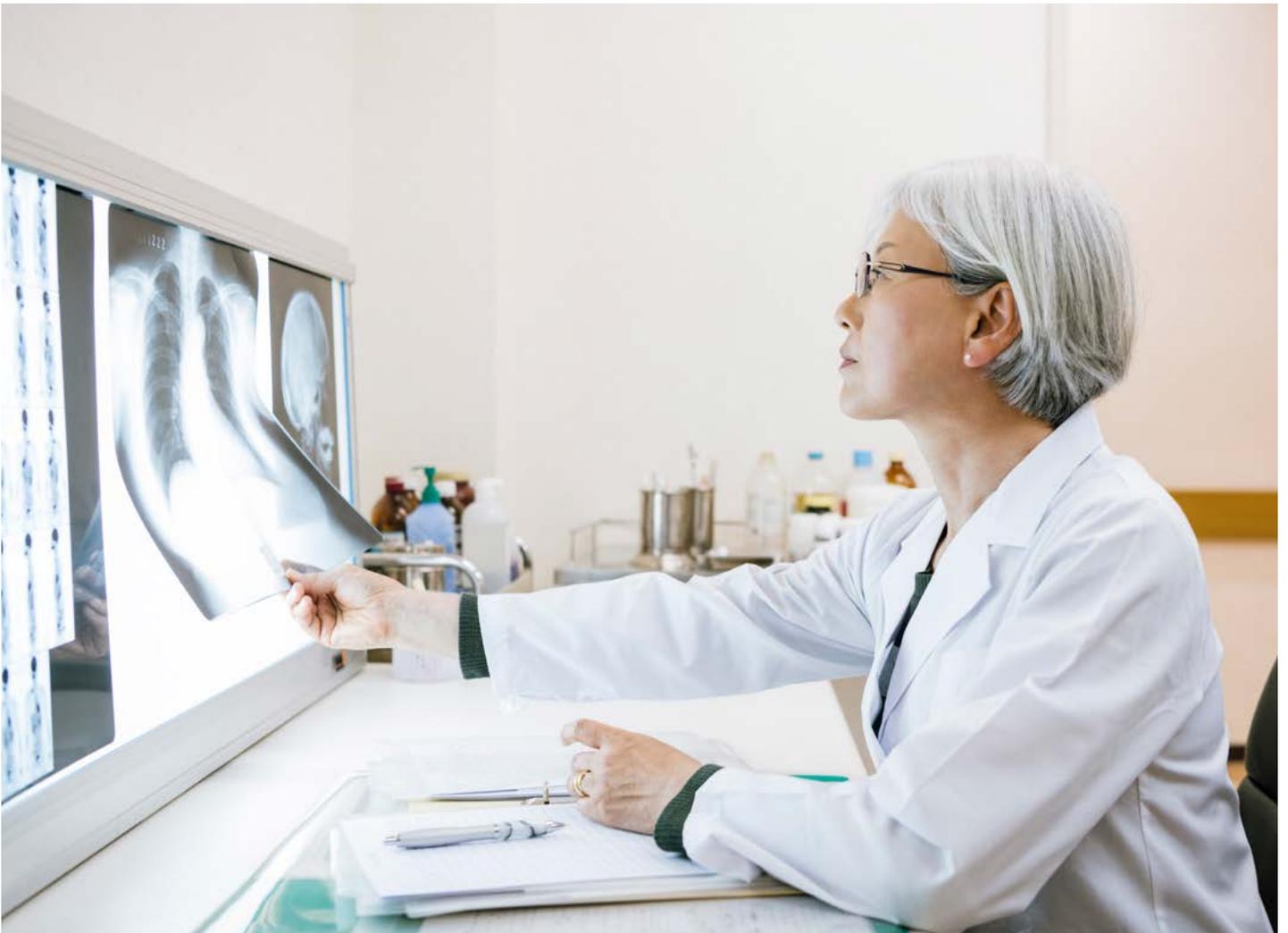
Inter and Intra DHB Referrals

In March 2018, Orion Health, healthAlliance and the Auckland region DHBs extended the Orion Health Referrals solution to replace paper referrals within and between the three DHBs. This solution enables any clinician to refer to another service within their hospital, or to services at either of the other DHBs, for an outpatient appointment. These secondary care referrals then arrive in the same queue as the primary care referrals for assessment and triage. This provides a level playing field and helps standardise the referral management process, regardless of whether the referral is created in a primary or secondary care setting.

Dr Lara Hopley, clinical IT champion at Waitemata DHB says "The Northern Metro DHB elective eReferral solution allows clinicians in the three Metro DHBs to now electronically refer a patient to another service within any one of the three hospitals. The system guides them to refer within the patient's domicile, but is flexible enough to refer to another DHB if they give a clinical reason. The forms are based on the current GP forms, and are received and managed in exactly the same way. A copy of the referral, and the grading outcome is also sent to the patient's GP. This is a massive step forward in 'between services' and 'between setting' communication, which will allow consistent grading to occur, and will increase visibility of the patient journey to all parties across the region."

This is a massive step forward in 'between services' and 'between setting' communication, which will allow consistent grading to occur, and will increase visibility of the patient journey to all parties across the region.

DR LARA HOPLEY,
Specialist Anaesthetist,
Waitemata DHB

Future Development

The partnership is forward looking. "Orion Health has a vision that helps us think through what it means to be a next-generation HIE," said Chaundy. On the horizon is integration of Orion Health's Amadeus platform, designed specifically to handle increasingly substantial and complex data streams and requirements, further solidifying KeyHIE's ability to meet its long-term objectives.

Orion Health

At Orion Health, we are building thinking software for life. Our new generation health software provides an open platform that seamlessly integrates local, regional, and national data, making it more readily available to doctors, pharmacists, nurses, specialists and patients themselves. We believe that our software, built on new generation technology, will give everyone healthier, happier and longer lives.

Find out more at: orionhealth.com

ORION HEALTH

Orion Health is a global healthcare technology company focused on reimagining healthcare for all. We are leading the change in digital health with health and care organisations to improve the wellbeing of every individual with our world leading Unified Healthcare Platform