



Waitematā
District Health Board

Best Care for Everyone

20 August, 2019

Patient experience boosted through new digital post system

In a major leap forward for patient experience, Waitematā DHB is now sending appointment, referral and clinic outcome letters to patients via email.

The digital post system was launched in March 2019 across a range of services, including Auckland Regional Dental Service, physiotherapy, cardiology and transcription. There are now around 8,000 letters per week being sent via digital post. This will ramp up to approximately 15,000 per week by the time roll-out is completed in February 2020, saving the DHB an estimated \$500,000 per year.

“There is a strong preference for email communication from our growing population and we are pleased at the speed we have been able to roll-out this option to patients,” says Associate Professor and Clinical Director of Innovation Dr Robyn Whittaker.

“Having a secure, sustainable and scalable digital post system in place makes absolute sense. There are also cost and environmental benefits for the DHB,” says Dr Whittaker.

Patient emails are collected during routine appointments and will be regularly validated to ensure they remain current. The DHB will continue to offer patients the option of receiving letters via traditional post.

Digital Post is one of many initiatives the DHB is developing to improve patient experience and outcomes through its Leapfrog programme, which is run out of the Institute for Innovation and Improvement, the only DHB-funded centre of innovation in New Zealand.

“Everything that is designed and developed within i3 and implemented through the Leapfrog programme is clinically-led and designed around our people and the patients we care for. We have people at the heart of every innovation and look forward to developing more sustainable and effective solutions in the future,” says Waitematā DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley.

Another recent example is eVitals, which enables nurses to enter vital signs (pulse, blood pressure, temperature, respiratory signs) and risk assessments at the bedside using an iPad mini that fits into their uniform pockets. The electronic record gives charge nurses visibility of all patients on a ward at the touch of a button.

The system can also be used as an early warning signal if patients are deteriorating.

The Leapfrog team is currently working on the roll-out of electronic progress notes to document patient recovery across the DHB and design work in preparation for the new \$240 million plus hospital building at North Shore Hospital.

The Leapfrog programme won the Business Transformation through Digital and IT category of the NZ CIO Awards on 12 June.

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About Waitematā DHB

Waitematā DHB serves the largest population of any district health board in New Zealand, currently standing at more than 630,000 people. We have a workforce of more than 7,500 staff spread across more than 80 sites, including North Shore Hospital and Waitakere Hospital. We are also the Northern Region provider of forensic psychiatry and child disability services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.