



MEDIA RELEASE - 27 JULY 2007

“Sharing patients’ information safely and appropriately is of paramount concern to the Health Information Strategy Action Committee (HISAC)” said its Chair, Paul Cressey in response to the concerns raised about Hutt Valley District Health Board’s eReferral project.

“We have been developing standards to ensure the safe and appropriate sharing of relevant information between different health professionals and others involved in the provision of health services.

The Hutt Valley eReferral project has been developed based on those standards.

Sharing health information is necessary to enable the ongoing provision of health services to patients. GPs need to refer their patients to specialists; hospitals need to make sure GPs know about the treatment and care that has been provided while in hospital. Such a flow of information will enable the continuity of care for patients.

The main change around the eReferral project is that the information is sent electronically in a secure fashion, rather than by letter or fax. The implementation of security safeguards required by the standards, ensures sending information electronically is safer than the traditional methods of exchanging information.

“Timely access to relevant and accurate information by appropriately authorised people benefits patients,” said Mr Cressey.

“Many people would be rightly concerned if their health information was being shared inappropriately, and so would HISAC. HISAC’s core principles are about getting the right information to the right person in the right place at the right time. We are taking a patient focused approach and any access to information must be relevant for the particular purpose, and the patient must be aware of that purpose.

HISAC will be leading a wide consultation process to develop a set of guiding principles to support sharing of relevant information about patients. We urge all people to get involved and provide their views as we go through this process,” said Paul Cressey.

304 Words

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THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF HISAC

The Health Information Strategic Action Committee was established by the Minister of Health in August 2005 to provide governance of, oversight of, and leadership for the implementation of the Health Information Strategy for New Zealand 2005 (HIS-NZ).

The HIS-NZ presents a sector-wide business strategy for the health and disability sector to develop and supply innovative health information systems. It has three broad objectives:

- to increase participation through networking and sharing of health information across the sector
- to support collaboration across providers in the care of consumers
- to improve targeting through improved decision-making.

The success of HIS-NZ relies on the co-operation and collaboration of the entire health sector.

Further information about the Health Information Strategy Action Committee is available from their website: <http://www.HISAC.govt.nz/>