



Whanganui and MidCentral health districts join forces to improve patient care

6 November 2017

For the past year and a half, clinical staff at Whanganui Hospital have been able to view a summary of the health information held by a patient's GP, through a Shared Care Record. This has meant that the doctors treating a patient are better placed to make safe and sound clinical decisions, based on knowledge of a patient's known allergies and health conditions, as well as their current medication.

Online access to the Shared Care Record allows health providers to safely and easily obtain a summary of patient information through a secure connection. Your information is protected, as the security is similar to internet banking. Information can only be accessed by authorised health professionals and access is audited to maintain confidentiality.

Whanganui Regional Health Network (WRHN) has been leading the implementation of the Shared Care Record in the Whanganui region and has recently reached an agreement with MidCentral DHB to form a joint Shared Care Record. With both health districts being geographic neighbours, there are many instances when patients receive care across the invisible health boundary.

"If any patients from Whanganui regional practices need to attend the Emergency Department or after-hours clinics in Palmerston North, those services will have access to the patient's General Practice information and this will be a huge support with diagnosis and treatment," says Whanganui Regional Health Network Clinical Director and Bulls Medical Centre GP Dr Ken Young.

"Consumers are increasingly mobile and expect that they will receive the same level of high quality healthcare regardless of wherever they are seen. If a patient is being treated for a significant trauma in the Emergency Department, they might not be able to provide critical health information. Already stressed relatives might find it difficult or impossible to pass on this information. With the Shared Care Record, that stress is removed." Dr Young says.

While this is a new development between our regions, some other areas like Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa are already successfully operating a joint Shared Care Record. All eleven General Practices under WRHN have implemented a Shared Care Record, which means over 57,000 enrolled patients in our district are participating.

If patients do not want their health information shared in this way, they can opt out at any time by calling the free phone 0800 727 664. More information is available from the Shared Care Record website www.sharedcarerecord.org.nz or by contacting the project leader, Karen Veldhoen at Whanganui Regional Health Network on (06) 348 0109.

For further comment please contact WRHN Communications Coordinator Karen Veldhoen on (06) 348 0109 extn 708