Introduction to Electronic Referrals

What are Electronic Referrals?

Electronic Referral is the seamless exchange of vital patient information from one healthcare provider to another using a secure messaging system. Using HealthLink's SmartForms through your practice management system, such as Best Practice, Medical Director or Genie, a GP can send a referral together with patient's medical history to the outpatient services at Canberra Health Services, Community Services, and My Aged Care. General practitioners can also send to specialists who are registered as HealthLink providers and are enabled for SmartForms.

Why do Electronic Referrals matter?

GPs often have to wonder whether or not a referral they submitted has been received. The use of traditional methods, via fax machines or email, does not have the ability to track whether a referral was received. Some referrals get lost through the system and the healthcare provider will only know about it when the patient calls it to their attention. Lost referrals can cause delays in medical treatments and life-threatening harm to the patient, and may potentially even be a cause of litigation against a GP.

Using HealthLink's SmartForms electronic referral system ensures that the referral is securely sent. HealthLink SmartForms will automatically track and validate to the referrer that their referral has been sent, and the specialist receiving the referral can send an acknowledgement to let them know when they have reviewed the referral. This provides a level of peace of mind to you as a practitioner and ensures better continuity of care for your patients.

Lastly, a copy of the electronic referral can also be sent to the patient's My Health Record.

How do Electronic Referrals benefit me and my practice?

Electronic Referrals may have many benefits to both the patient and prescriber:

- Provides a smooth, efficient, and easy way to submit referrals in real-time.
- It can reduce risk of loss of referrals, due to the system's ability to track referrals.
- Can improve communication between healthcare providers.
- Reduce duplication of referrals and processing time.
- SmartForms can also allow you to submit an online application to ACT Health for authority to prescribe controlled medications.

Electronic Referrals Checklist for General Practice

☐ Ensure that your practice clinical software is updated to the most recent version and is one of the software vendors connected with HealthLink.
HealthLink is compatible with Best Practice, Medical Director, Genie and Shexie.

☐ Ensure your practice has a Healthcare Provider Identifier – Organisation (HPI-O) and is connected to the HI Service, and ensure your practitioners have Healthcare Provider Identifiers (HPI-Is).
Register these through PRODA, and ensure they are all linked in your practice's clinical software.

☐ Register your practice and your general practitioners to HealthLink's system.
Go to HealthLink's registration page. One of their team members will assist you to register.

☐ Coordinate with your IT personnel to integrate HealthLink in your practice management software.
Integration guides are provided in HealthLink's Knowledge Base.

☐ Ensure that patients Individual Healthcare Identifier's (IHI's) are validated through the practice clinical software.
Patients with Medicare details are automatically provided with IHI.

☐ Familiarise yourself on how to use SmartForms.
Read the User Guides and Frequently Asked Questions.

☐ If you do not have a compatible practice clinical software, access HealthLink's web portal.
Log-in to HealthLink's Web Portal and enter your username and password. Read through the Quick Start Guide on how to navigate the website.

For ongoing support and education, please visit HealthLink's website, or contact the Capital Health Network's Digital Health Team (see contact page at back of this booklet).

Websites to visit:
digitalhealth.gov.au
healthlink.net/products/smart-forms
healthlink.net/knowledge-base
myhealthrecord.gov.au/ereferrals
au.healthlink.net/au_registration
auportal.healthlink.net/hlkportal/login