



New England / North West Renal goes Smart

Smart Health enhances renal patient treatment in New England / Northwest

New England Area Health Service (NEAHS) today formally launched "Smart Health", an innovative, renal patient record keeping system which records patient information in an on-line database. Healthcare provider and patient smart cards are used to ensure the highest level of privacy of patient information.

Fergus Fitzsimons, New England Area Health Service, Deputy Administrator said this initiative allows patients to manage their healthcare at multiple sites, with patient information being downloaded and updated at any site where they are receiving dialysis treatment.

"This is a first in NSW where patient information is transferred in a sophisticated electronic manner and I congratulate our nephrologist, Dr Stephen May who leads the NEAHS renal team, for his visionary approach to patient record keeping and retrieval.

Dr May said that demand for renal services is increasing and this initiative will link the limited care satellite haemodialysis units at Armidale, Inverell and Moree with the higher care hub based at Tamworth Base Hospital.

"This satellite concept of delivering dialysis makes it imperative for the renal team to work together, sharing and accessing patients' medical records.

"This was previously complex and difficult because traditional medical records are not allowed to leave the hospital, making it extremely hard for the renal staff to streamline care without

"This will enhance renal patients' treatment. For example, I can adjust a patient's dialysis prescription in Inverell when I am working from the Tamworth renal unit and renal nurses in Inverell can immediately make the necessary adjustments."

"We will also see home dialysis patients coming into hospital and their medication; medical history will be assessed through Smart Health by renal health care providers. This system will eventually be available to all GPs that look after renal patients locally."

"This is yet another step in breaking down the geographical barriers, enhancing our existing service and ensuring patient safety, confidentiality, and quality care is delivered at all times," Dr May said.

NSW Health is progressing the development and implementation of a state Electronic Health Record, known as Healthelink.

This will be introduced initially in greater western Sydney and the Hunter from mid 2005, and will be incrementally rolled out across the whole State. This is in line with yesterday's announcement by the NSW Minister for Health, Morris Iemma, to extend clinical networks between Hunter and the New England Area Health Services through amalgamation.

The smart card project in New England will contribute to the state strategy, and will provide an immediate benefit to local patients until the state wide implementation of Health elink is completed.

Photo Opportunity:

When: 11am, Wednesday, 28 July.

Where: Renal Unit, Tamworth Base Hospital

Who: Fergus Fitzsimons and executives from "Smart Health"

Media contact:

Annette McCarthy
0428 408 377



New England Area
Health Service