

## Southern DHB's MDM solution to roll out through Health Connect South

Written by Kate McDonald on 14 July 2017.



The cancer multidisciplinary meeting (MDM) system developed in-house by Southern District Health Board in 2013 is set to roll out to the rest of the South Island progressively from the end of this month, accessible to teams through the island-wide Health Connect South clinical portal.

The single, shared MDM system allows a range of specialists to case conference and share care plans and treatment options for individual patients electronically, overcoming timeliness and care coordination barriers caused by paper correspondence and discrete databases and spreadsheets.

It is particularly useful for oncology MDMs as clinical staff caring for individual patients can include many different oncologists, radiologists, surgeons and specialist nurses.

The system was designed and developed by Southern DHB application developer Lance Elder in association with respiratory physician and chair of the lung cancer MDM Colin Wong, former MDM quality facilitator Paula Goodman and medical oncologist and MDM clinical lead Blair McLaren.

Dr McLaren said the Southern team had taken a pragmatic approach to the system's development with the aim of creating an intuitive and functional electronic form that could be easily completed in real time to support and document decision making in the MDM.

The system is also used to provide electronic summaries in the patient health record.

“It was also important to ensure there was consistency across the different tumour streams that use the system,” Dr McLaren said in a statement.

The system is now going to be progressively rolled out to the rest of the South Island, piloted by Canterbury DHB gynae-oncology and lung cancer MDMs for six weeks.

The project is being led by the South Island Alliance’s Southern Cancer Network with the South Island Cancer MDM governance group providing clinical leadership.

Chair of the governance group and Canterbury DHB consultant radiologist Adrian Balasingam said that currently, a mix of different systems is being used such as letters sent by post, emails and spreadsheets.

“It could be weeks before all the information was collated, finalised and available for everyone to view,” Dr Balasingam said. “Now, this information will be available to our clinical teams and GPs within hours or a day.”

He said the solution will significantly speed up the entire process, which is also a part of the South's faster cancer treatment (FCT) initiative.

Southern DHB said other advantages of a single, shared electronic MDM system include better alignment of MDM processes and practice across the South Island; quality and consistency of referral information; improved timeliness of clinical documentation following meetings; increased visibility of patient care coordination and inter-district flow; and better support for clinical audit and reporting requirements.

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