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General Practice NZ and Te Whatu Ora team up for GP2GP survey



Stephen Forbes

sforbes@nzdoctor.co.nz

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General Practice NZ and Te Whatu Ora are conducting a survey with practice managers to get a better understanding of issues with the GP2GP system [Image: ipopba on iStock]

“This is about gauging what the issues are [with GP2GP] and what needs to be addressed going forward”

General Practice NZ and Te Whatu Ora are joining forces to conduct a survey of practice managers to get their feedback on the ailing GP2GP system.

In March, GPNZ chair Bryan Betty said the system was past its use-by-date and called for Te Whatu Ora and the Ministry of Health to take responsibility for the problems practices were facing daily with it.

GP2GP allows for the transfer of patient records between practices and the bulk transfer of records if a clinic changes its practice management system. It is used to move hundreds of thousands of files annually, but GPs are reporting problems with using it and are calling for change.

Dr Betty said GPNZ had raised its concerns with Te Whatu Ora and the ministry about the clinical risks associated with the system.

“If complete notes aren’t transferred from one practice to another, it creates risks, not just for the practice, but the patient as well,” he said.

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Data will guide actions

In a statement, Te Whatu Ora data and digital director of sector digital channels Michael Dreyer confirmed it is now conducting a survey of practice managers, as part of its work with GPNZ to better understand the issues and number of the incidents with the GP2GP system. The study started on 2 May and is expected to run until 16 May.

“We have received anecdotal feedback that highlights the clinical risk and administrative burden felt in practices from the GP2GP system. The survey will provide user-informed data to guide our actions,” Mr Dreyer says.

“We are already taking action where we can, and the working group, made up of representatives from Health NZ [Te Whatu Ora] and GPNZ, are looking at short-term and long-term solutions to address GP2GP issues. We’re committed to using the findings to both inform remedial actions with the current system and design for any future replacement.”

He says there is currently no national standard for transferring patient records.

“Through the feedback from the survey, we are looking to create a national standard that enables practices to transfer records in a way that is more efficient and reduces clinical risk.”

Notes transfer needs solution

Dr Betty says finding a solution to the ongoing problems with GP2GP is key.

“There have been some discussions with the Te Whatu Ora data and digital team and one of those discussions has been about GP2GP and what its future looks like and there’s a need for a fit-for-purpose way for transferring notes,” he says.

“This is about gauging what the issues are [with GP2GP] and what needs to be addressed going forward.”

According to GPNZ’s Pānui newsletter released on 2 May, it has also formed a working group with the Te Whatu Ora data and digital team.



General Practice NZ chair Bryan Betty

Background of GP2GP

Karl Cole is a specialist GP at Auckland's Papatoetoe Family Doctors, a member of the RNZCGP board and has a keen interest in health IT and technology. He welcomed the survey and the creation of a joint working group between GPNZ and Te Whatu Ora to look at GP2GP.

“At least this acknowledges it has not been maintained and this is an attempt to define the size of the issue.”

Dr Cole says many of the problems with GP2GP are due to a lack of maintenance and, despite the problems GPs and practices face in transferring patient records, fixing the existing system is the most obvious solution.

Health IT company Patients First, owned by GPNZ (the RNZCGP is a former shareholder), developed GP2GP. But Patients First was wound up in 2022 after the ministry ended its contract. In a bid to ensure some of the services continued, the ministry's IT division agreed to administer the GP2GP service, before it was transferred to Te Whatu Ora as part of the health reforms.

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