



HealthLink

The National HealthLink Project

.....SERVING GENERAL PRACTITIONERS NEEDS

Volume 1, Issue II

15th November 2006

Statistical Update November 2006

No. of GPs using
HealthlinkOnline:
660

No. of Practices:
328

No. of Practice Staff:
736

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Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of our Healthlink newsletter especially to coincide with the HISI conference 2006. All feedback and input from you is most welcome. The newsletter will outline to you the changes that are taking

place within Healthlink, the developments underway, the new connections and update you on our latest statistics. We would hope that this could be distributed amongst your staff to create a greater awareness of Healthlink.

Healthcare Informatics Society of Ireland 11th Annual Conference

Thank you for visiting our stand. If you would like to know more about Healthlink or would like a demonstration of the HealthlinkOnline services, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the Healthlink team.

Please note also that a paper being presented by Dr. Niall Tubridy (St Vincent's University Hospital) and Ms Gemma Garvan (National Healthlink Project) entitled "Neurolink – A Simpler Way to Make Patient's Life Easier". This will be presented in the session entitled "Supporting Clinical Processes – Technologies, Systems & Models" on Thursday 16th November at 16.00.

HSE / Hospitals Update

The existing hospitals supplying Healthlink with messages are:

- **HSE MW – Limerick Regional, Ennis General, St Joseph's Nenagh**
- **The Mater Hospital**
- **Beaumont Hospital**
- **St James's Hospital**
- **Connolly Hospital**
- **St Vincent's Hospital**

A number of new connections have been added to the Healthlink portfolio since August including:



HSE West - This region went live with Healthlink for lab results from UCHG, Mayo General and Roscommon Hospitals on November 1st 2006. The GPs in this area

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HSE / Hospitals Update (contd.)

receiving Biochemistry, Microbiology and Haematology results. The go-live was a culmination of a lot of hard



work and co-operation between the HSE West and the Healthlink Team. New users are being set up for this area at present.

Gemma Garvan, Deputy Project Manager, Healthlink (centre) pictured at the recent launch of HealthlinkOnline in the HSE West with members of the HSE West Project team.

A number of **pilot** projects are underway also including:

HSE Midlands – The review meeting of the Project Board took place and a decision was made to go live in the HSE Midlands with Healthlink. There are a number of support structures that must be put in place in the HSE Midlands prior to a go-live date being agreed. It is hoped that this project will go-live before year-end. The GPs in this region will then be in a position to receive lab results from Mullingar and Portlaoise Hospitals.



AMNCH – Radiology results are being distributed to the six pilot practices involved in this project. A review meeting will be held later this month to decide on the next stage of the project.

Temple St – Work is continuing to enable distribution of messages from the National Children's Hospital. The initial messages that will be available include A&E Attendance, Death Notification, Discharge Notifications and OPD messages. As Temple St is used by GPs nationwide, it is envisaged that this will bring an increased number of users to Healthlink.

St Mary 's Hospital, Phoenix Park – Healthlink staff, the Mater Hospital and the staff at St Mary 's are working closely to enable this site to order lab tests online via Healthlink as well as receiving the lab results back online. It is hoped to commence a pilot in this area prior to Christmas with a view to go-live in the New Year.

Portiuncula, Ballinasloe – Clinical testing of lab results from the Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe is being carried out at present with the staff there. Much has been learned by the staff there about Healthlink from the experience of Healthlink implementation in the other hospitals in the HSE West. A pilot should commence here prior to Christmas with a go-live early in the New Year.

The Healthlink Team

There are five members of the Healthlink Team. They are:

- Gemma Garvan, Deputy Project Manager
- Orla Doogue, Senior Analyst Programmer
- Karina Crosbie, GP Liaison & Support
- Antonio De Melo, Programmer
- Marie Lalor, Project Manager
(lalorm@healthlink.doh.ie, ph. 01 8825720)

The National Healthlink Project – the future is bright...

Discussions have taken place with the ICT Directorate of the HSE in relation to establishing Healthlink as the National Messaging Solution for the Irish Health Systems.

HealthlinkOnline - Developments

Online Lab Ordering

The **Online Lab Order** functionality is live for Mater GPs only. This service is now available and is hoped that it will eventually replace the manual order system. It provides great accuracy in the area of patient demographics, emergency contact phone number and clinical details. The interface can also calculate the correct number of specimens to send with the order based on the items ordered. It is also hoped that this message will eventually be integrated into the Practice Management System also providing a complete patient history for orders placed and results received. A number of other hospitals have expressed interest in this project also.

Online Neurology Referral

The **Online Neurology** service

will be available live to St Vincent 's GPs only from December 1st 2006. This is essentially a Request/Response service between the GP and the Neurologists at St Vincent 's Hospital. There is huge potential for this service due to the size of waiting lists for Neurology services and the small number of Neurologist in the country. It is also hoped that this message can be integrated into the Practice Management System. With only 17 neurologists in this country and waiting lists of around 2 years to see a consultant, this system could be hugely beneficial in cutting out unnecessary visits to the neurologist and reducing waiting times. Furthermore, the system is more 'instantaneous' – giving the GP an immediate answer on a recommended course of action and avoiding situations where a patient may be sent to a neurologist before

sufficient information is obtained from the GP. Also, the quick response cuts down on the amount of anxiety suffered by the patient 's waiting.

HSE innovation Awards 2006

The Online Neurology Project was a finalist in the recent HSE Innovation Awards 2006. The team, including Dr. Niall Tubridy were presented with a certificate in the Category "Innovative Management of Services – including Technology & Communication Innovation".

Online Lab Ordering was short-listed (from 260 entrants to 1 of 40) for the HSE Innovation Awards 2006. The project was commended in the areas of implementation and partnership. It presented good solid results and showed great potential for replication.

www.healthlink.ie

The Healthlink website is constantly updated and can be viewed at www.healthlink.ie It is planned to make our technical documentation available to you on a secure area of the site. The log-in details can be requested by sending an email to info@healthlink.doh.ie.



Healthlink.NET is now the focus of the development team towards mid 2007. It is hoped that this will provide an improved infrastructure to Healthlink with improved security, web services and many new features some of which have come as suggestions from the users. Testing this new version will require considerable time and working with the suppliers will form a large part of this also.

About Healthlink

Healthlink is an electronic communications project funded by the Health Service Executive. The project was initiated in the Mater Hospital in 1995 but quickly evolved into a national project with the launch of HealthlinkOnline in 2003. Our service is available free of charge to all GPs. Some initial investment is required by Hospitals and Health Areas to become involved.

The objective of the Healthlink project is to implement a prototype healthcare communications network with specific reference to Primary Care Practitioners and acute Hospital and agency relationships, and data exchange.

HealthlinkOnline

HealthlinkOnline is a web-based messaging service which allows the secure transfer of patient information over the internet. The message types available in the HealthlinkOnline system are:

- Laboratory Results
- Radiology Result
- Death Notifications
- Discharge Notifications
- Discharge Summaries
- A & E Attendance Notification
- Waiting List Updates
- OPD Appointment Updates
- Lab Orders & Acknowledgements
- Referral Messages

These messages are specified in HL7 version 2.4 and formatted in XML version 2.0.

Benefits to General Practice include:

- Reduction in phone calls to hospital lab - time saving
- Reduction in administration (& admin costs)
- Reduction in clerical errors from manually entering data
- Integration with Practice Management Systems



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