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**Other practitioner eligibility to refer for imaging**

Community Referred Radiology (CRR) Programme

Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora recognises that access to timely and effective radiology is critical to providing high quality care, reducing waiting times for treatment and improving outcomes.

**Phased programme roll out from September 2025**

To ensure patients of similar clinical need can access imaging in similar timeframes, we have standardised clinical criteria for primary care to directly access radiology.

The Phase 1 *National Primary Care Referral Criteria for Imaging* allows General Practitioners, Urgent Care Doctors, and Nurse Practitioners to refer patients directly for imaging without a specialist assessment or emergency department referral from September 2025. **Available** [**here**](https://radiology.carepathways.tewhatuora.govt.nz/national)

**Will direct access be expanded to other professional groups?**

Currently, there is variation across the country in which professional groups, beyond General Practitioners, Urgent Care Doctors, and Nurse Practitioners, are eligible to refer for imaging.

Future phases of the programme will consider expanding direct access to additional modalities and to other primary healthcare practitioners for defined indications. A phased approach to enhanced access will lessen the burden on any one professional group.

Broader referral eligibility will also help address workforce shortages in rural and remote areas, ease pressure on general practitioners and emergency departments, and ensure patients receive timely and appropriate imaging. This direction aligns with Ministerial priorities to strengthen primary care capability and competency.

**What is being done to develop a nationally consistent approach to referrer eligibility?**

Work is underway to develop a nationally consistent approach to referrer eligibility for registered healthcare professionals in advanced practice roles to directly request specified radiology investigations.

As part of the 2025 work programme, the Radiology National Clinical Network is developing a National Framework that will set out the principles for enabling more consistent and equitable access to clinical imaging referrals, including associated training requirements.

The outcome of this work will provide greater clarity for radiology departments, non-medical healthcare practitioners and their organisations, and for the CRR scheme.

**How soon will referrer eligibility be expanded?**

The timing and extent to which referrer eligibility is expanded will be constrained by available funding and monitoring waitlist demand. Widening eligibility to other referrer groups will require tight clinical pathways and clinical governance arrangements (including the CRR hubs) to be in place.

CRR hubs will play a vital role in triaging referrals to ensure referrals from eligible referrers are not rejected by public radiology services; as well as moderating demand by promoting adherence to the criteria.

Over the coming months, the programme team will work with clinical colleagues and key stakeholders to identify priority conditions where direct referral access delivers the greatest benefit for both patients and the wider health system.

**What does this mean for other practitioners with existing access from 30th September?**

Until the scoping of direct access for other community-based healthcare professionals is completed and national criteria are extended, services should, as an interim arrangement, continue to apply current processes for managing referrals from these practitioners, who are expected to adhere to the new national criteria.