

Hospital system on road to recovery

CLAIRE ROGERS

Last updated 05:00 24/01/2011

 Text Size

 Print

 Share



MAARTEN HOLL/Dominion Post

PROGRESS: David Jones, left, and Capital and Coast ICT director Stuart Wakefield among health records now being put online.

Capital & Coast Health says its information technology systems are in better shape now that patients are on a \$4 million hospital system that lets clinicians more easily see and update their health information.

The system brings a range of information including patient test results, prescriptions and referral letters – previously spread across different systems – into one record for clinicians to help improve the quality of healthcare.

The DHB has had multiple computer problems in the past – with system errors preventing the dispatch of discharge summaries, the printing of radiological reports and the board from collecting potentially millions of dollars in patient revenue.

The new system, which also lets doctors access pre-populated discharge summary forms, was a major improvement, Capital & Coast IT director Stuart Wakefield said.

It is likely patients will be able to access a version of their health record in future so they can see and in some cases update their information online.

Mr Wakefield said the system would help improve clinical productivity. "A lot of focus has been about eliminating the need to

do manual re-entering. This touches pretty much every frontline physician we have got."

The system automatically fills in forms where it can with patient information and generates prescriptions – meaning doctors no longer need to rewrite them on paper once they have been keyed in to a computer.

"It's probably the biggest, single [technology] project we've done in the last 12 to 18 months. The other focus has been on sorting out the technical infrastructure. We've had a number of issues with power and datacentre-related issues."

The uninterruptible power supply at the hospital's datacentre failed in June, bringing down all the DHB's systems. Mr Wakefield said it planned to open a new \$2m on-site datacentre that would support the hospital's core applications by the middle of the year.

The DHB was going to build a second disaster-recovery datacentre at its Kenepuru site but that project had been put on hold while it worked with the National Health Board on a regional plan for health IT infrastructure, he said.

Physician and IT clinical adviser David Jones said the new health record system did not now let clinicians access X-ray images but could be updated in future to allow this, and could reduce paper usage by letting doctors read and sign off test results on a PC rather than paper.

The DHB is part of a lower North Island initiative to create a portal that would let clinicians in the region access a single view of patient information stored on multiple systems.

That would mean, for example, tests done in one hospital could be accessed by a clinician in another hospital in the region.