

## H. C. Christensen Dental Practice Referral Policy

When deciding on a course of treatment for a patient all possible treatments must be considered.

If the treatment necessary is beyond the skill or experience of the dental professional then it is essential to refer the patient for that treatment. The patient may also request a referral to another provider and this must be facilitated

- Consider where and who to refer to – (see providers accepting referrals)
- Discuss this with the patient and confirm that the patient is in agreement (there may be local access issues re transport etc)
- Is the referral immediate, urgent or non- urgent
- Arrange to make contact with the provider clinician – either by telephone/letter/email
- Where contact is made via email or phone this must be followed up by a written referral and must be done promptly
- In the case of an immediate referral the referral letter must accompany the patient
- In all other cases a letter must be posted within 2 working days of confirmation of the need for the referral
- The referral letter must contain (see referral letter template)
  - a) Patient name, address, date of birth and telephone details
  - b) Referring clinician's name and contact details
  - c) A reason for the referral and explanation of the request – as thorough as possible.
  - d) When the patient was seen for this referral
- A copy of the referral letter must be kept in the patient's records
- If the patient requests they should be able to see the referral letter
- All future communications should be retained for the patient's records

## Referral Policy

### **Immediate Referral**

If immediate referral is necessary

- The patient must be informed why immediate referral is necessary and kept informed at all times – it is also important that the patient consents to this
- Make contact with the clinician or department that is needed for the referral – initial contact can be made by the practice receptionist in a confidential manner but the referring practitioner must speak to the clinician of choice to explain the clinical situation and the need for immediate referral
- Once the immediate referral has been confirmed a referral letter as per referral policy must be written and given to the patient to deliver by hand
- Confirm the patient's transport – do they need accompanying? Are they able to drive themselves? If they need accompanying then make arrangements to facilitate this with a family member/friend. (It is the nature of immediate referral that the patient will more than likely need to be accompanied)
- Ensure records are updated and if necessary a significant incident analysis completed

### **Urgent Referral**

Urgent referral is necessary for suspected Oral Cancer cases – in these circumstances an Urgent Oral Cancer referral should be seen for initial consultation within 2 weeks of referral. (NICE guidance).

- If an urgent referral is required discuss with the patient and explain why this is necessary and receive the patient's consent
- Make contact with the clinician or department that is needed for the referral – either by phone/email/letter
- Follow up phone/email contact with a referral letter as per referral policy
- The referral letter must be marked “URGENT” with a full description of the problem to ensure the patient is seen within the two week window
- Ensure records are updated and if necessary a significant incident analysis completed

Referral Policy

### **Further Info**

[www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)

Standards for Dental Professionals 1.3

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

NICE clinical practice guidelines No. CG27

<http://www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/sign90.pdf>

Diagnosis and management of head and neck cancer

<http://www.bsperio.org.uk/members/referral.htm>

<https://ico.org.uk>