

To all Referrers

Dear All,

Here in Cork University Dental School and Hospital we are endeavouring to improve how we manage our patient referrals and our waiting lists. There are some things which we would now like to bring to your attention, as they may affect how you refer patients to us.

### **Patients with Medical Cards**

Firstly, we wish to take this opportunity to remind you that, unfortunately, we are not permitted to directly accept patients who wish to avail of treatment on their Medical Card. If you wish to refer a patient for treatment under their medical card, you need to send the referral to the Principal Dental Surgeon in your area for approval. All referrals are triaged and, if approved, the Principal Dental Surgeon will forward the referral to us for management under the Service Level Agreement we have with the HSE.

### **Emergency Clinic**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we operated a walk-in Emergency Clinic each weekday morning. Patients queued from early morning, often in bad weather, to be seen. This system was problematic, in that demand often exceeded capacity and patients had to be sent away. At that time, if patients wanted to access our Student Treatment Waiting List the Emergency Clinic was the only avenue open to them.

Changes were implemented during the pandemic which we believe have resulted in a better experience for patients and, as a result, we have not reverted to a walk-in emergency clinic. We now operate a Triage Line for patients who need emergency treatment and this is open between 9am and 1pm, Monday to Friday. The contact number is **086 1587557** and patients will be given a specific appointment time when they phone us.

We cannot guarantee that patients presenting to CUDSH without an appointment will be seen.

### **Self-Referral – Restorative Student Waiting List**

Patients who wish to attend our Student Restorative Clinic can now self-refer by completing a form available on our website (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/> ) or at the following link: <https://forms.gle/yirXuv9NHJBSC1mj8>

### **SALUD – Electronic Patient Record**

In August 2023 we went live with our new Electronic Patient Record. This has brought many benefits for patients, students and staff. We have reviewed and updated our Referral Form; there is a link to this on our website and we are attaching an editable version with this letter. We are working on including this editable version on our website. We can also accept completed referral forms to our secure email address [uccdental@healthmail.ie](mailto:uccdental@healthmail.ie). In order to use this pathway, you will need to register for your own Healthmail address. The process is easy, quick and free and details are available on our website.

The introduction of an Electronic Patient Record has allowed us to re-structure our Administration and Dental Nursing teams. We have now introduced the role of Senior Dental Nurse in each clinical area and we have set up a Clinic Administration Office. This office now deals with all incoming referrals and our waiting lists. They can be contacted on (021) 4901169. We will be carrying out regular administrative validation of our waiting lists, so that we can offer a more streamlined appointments system, reduce DNA's and ensure that patients are seen as quickly as possible.

We are planning to launch a Patient Portal which will allow patients to request re-scheduling of their appointments and access certain information regarding their treatment. We will keep you updated on progress through our website.

### **Prof. Conor Barry – OMFS Consultant**

Prof. Barry works across three sites - Cork University Dental School and Hospital, Cork University Hospital (CUH) and the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital (SIVUH). He has recently commenced a clinic in SIVUH. Please ensure that referrals are sent to the relevant address.

Consultation Referrals should now be forwarded to:

Referrals Office  
South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital  
Old Blackrock Road  
Cork

Referrals to Prof. Barry for treatment under General Anaesthetic should be forwarded to:

Prof. Conor Barry  
OMFS Consultant  
Cork University Hospital  
Wilton  
Cork

### **General Anaesthetic**

Cork University Dental School and Hospital continue to treat patients under general anaesthetic in CUH. Unfortunately, over the last 3 years, our access to theatre has been significantly reduced. This has meant that our waiting lists for patients requiring extractions and oral surgery under general anaesthetic are lengthening. We are endeavouring to work with the HSE to secure additional theatre time but, to date, have met with little success. We are continually validating our waiting lists to ensure that they are accurate and we have also been reviewing patients on our waiting list with a view to completing their treatment under conscious sedation, where appropriate. Please be aware of this when referring patients.

### **Additional Needs**

Unfortunately, given our current infrastructure, there are some patient needs that we are not in a position to accommodate. We are hoping to undertake a refurbishment project which will improve our accessibility but, for now, we cannot bring large wheelchairs into our X-ray Department and outside the department our radiographic options are limited to basic intraoral films. We are also unable to accommodate patients who require a hoist, adult changing facilities or significant support with toileting. We are very happy to discuss patient needs in advance of a referral or appointment and will

make every effort to deliver care, where at all possible. Again, please be aware of these limitations when referring patients to us.

### **Access and Car Parking**

Anyone who has visited the CUH campus in recent months will be aware of the many building projects that are in progress around us at the moment. It is now much more difficult to move around the CUH site and the number of car park spaces is greatly reduced. Your patients will need to allow more time to find parking and it may be necessary for them to consider public transport options.

There is no longer general public access to the parking area in front of the Dental School and Hospital; access to this car park is restricted to Blue Badge holders and to drop-off and collection for those with mobility issues. Entry to the car park is granted by contacting CUH Security via the call button at the entrance barrier.

We are privileged to provide care for the many patients who are referred to us. We are very grateful for the support of our referrers and appreciative of the good relationship we have enjoyed with so many of you over the years. Our hope is that we can continue to provide a good service to you and your patients into the future. We are always open to suggestions for improvement and would welcome your comments in response to this communication.