Event Briefing

Middlemore ED AI Scribe

Due to MO:	20 October 2025	Reference	HNZ00101359
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
From:	Dr Vanessa Thornton, Group Director of Operations, Health New Zealand	Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau		
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Proactive Release:	Choose an item.		

Contact for phone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
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Dr Vanessa Thornton	Group Director of Operations, Health NZ Counties Manukau		x

Attachments

Appendix 1:	Runsheet	
Appendix 2:	Health targets	
Appendix 3:	Communications Approach – AI Scribe	

About the event

Purpose	To discuss the rollout of the AI scribe tool to EDs across New Zealand
Date	Tuesday 21 October 2025
Time	2.30pm – 3.15pm
Venue	Middlemore Hospital Emergency Department 100 Hospital Road Otahuhu Auckland 2025
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora representatives	Dr Vanessa Thornton - Group Director of Operations and Emergency Physician, Health NZ Counties Manukau Dr Jeremy Dryden – Clinical Director for Acute Critical and Central Services (ACaCS), Health NZ Counties Manukau Dr Sarah Bowker – Emergency Medicine Specialist and Co-Head of Department, Health NZ Counties Manukau Dr Brett Gerrard – Emergency Medicine Specialist, Health NZ Counties Manukau Yvette Hallam – Service Manager Emergency Department, Health NZ Counties Manukau Nicole Gray – Principal Communications Advisor, Health NZ Northern Region
Media	One reporter and one cameraperson are expected
Talking points	N/A

Background

1. This event briefing supports your attendance at Middlemore Hospital Emergency Department (ED) to discuss the rollout of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) scribe tool to EDs across New Zealand.

2. Counties Manukau District provides healthcare for the 623,000 population of South Auckland, extending from Otahuhu in the north to beyond Pokeno in the south, and from the west coast to the Firth of Thames in the east.

3. The district has a high proportion of low decile communities and is ethnically diverse with the population split being 16% Maaori, 23% Pacific peoples, 31% Asian and 30% European & Other. It has the most people under 14 years of age in the Northern Region and the highest growth of peoples over the age of 65 years in New Zealand.

4. Socio-economic deprivation in South Auckland is the highest in the Auckland metropolitan region at 37% in Quintile five. Pacific peoples (75%) and Maaori (58%) are over-represented in Quintile five with 44% of under 14-year-olds in this category.

5. The rural population of the Counties Manukau district represents 4.5% of the population,

approximately 28,000 people.

Healthcare facilities

6. The district operates two main centres; Middlemore Hospital (MMH) is the acute care site and Manukau Health Park (MHP) provides out-patient and elective surgical services. There are a number of peripheral sites across the district providing inpatient, outpatient, maternity, mental health and spinal services, notably in Pukekohe, Botany, Mangere, Papakura and Papatoetoe.

7. MMH provides a wide range of secondary services and some tertiary services being the National Centre for Burns and the North Island centre for spinal surgery and rehabilitation. It also encompasses Kidz First, a paediatric medical centre, Tiaho Mai, an acute mental health centre and one of the busiest emergency departments in New Zealand.

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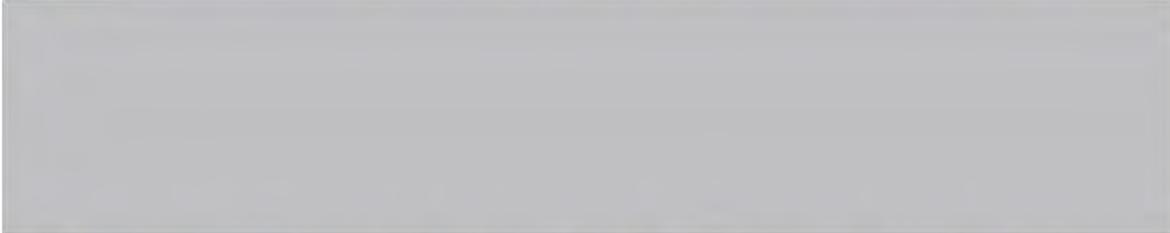
9. Birthing rates are the highest in New Zealand with 7,890 births in the last financial year. This is largely attributable to a growing Asian population.

10. High acute attendances, and high birth rates, are pressurising inpatient services. The number of beds available has marginally increased over the last two years as MMH has refurbished facilities and converted from non-clinical to clinical spaces. Current acute general inpatient beds at MMH are 788 with another 278 beds within Maternity, Mental Health and in localities. Beds at other sites are only able to support lower acuity patients. The Emergency Department has 55 short stay beds.

11. You have visited Health NZ Counties Manukau facilities several times in recent months. Your most recent visit was to Manukau Health Park (MHP) in September to announce a funding pool for small-scale infrastructure projects for the remediation and upgrade of existing Health NZ facilities.

Discussion

12. HealthX is Health NZ's innovation accelerator, enabling rapid adoption of proven digital and AI solutions to address system pressures and improve patient care.

13. Traditional implementation models cannot keep pace with global advancements in AI; HealthX provides a structured pathway for responsible, evidence-based deployment of technologies such as AI scribes, remote monitoring, and workflow automation.

14. The programme operates as a continuous pipeline of clinician-led initiatives, supported by governance and assurance frameworks, ensuring innovations are adapted to Aotearoa's clinical and cultural context.

15. HealthX will deliver regionally focused initiatives that are nationally scalable, leveraging partnerships with global innovators and local subject matter experts (SMEs) while

building internal capability through co-design and training.

16. The *Communications Approach – AI Scribe* can be found at Appendix 4.

Background on the use of ambient AI scribes in Health NZ Emergency Departments

- An ambient AI scribe is a tool that listens to clinician-patient conversations and creates accurate notes, reducing typing and freeing time for care. It can also listen to clinician-to-clinician conversations such as ambulance handovers, inter-service referrals and consultant opinions, then transcribe a note.

- Mainly a hybrid system of using a phone app signed into your account to listen to the clinical encounter, after patient consent obtained. When finished, the note can be reviewed on a two-screen desktop computer, for editing then copying into the patient electronic record. Further detail and information can be added, and the note refined, edited or further summarised.

- Pilot results show documentation time cut by up to 75%, improved note quality, and reduced clinician burnout.

- The tool has passed cybersecurity and privacy checks.

- Nationwide rollout underway, starting with high-need EDs; over 1,000 licenses secured.

- As part of the national rollout, Health NZ is allocating 100 AI scribe licences to central region mental health crisis teams and ED mental health staff.

- This targeted expansion aims to enhance care for tāngata whai ora presenting in crisis.

▒▒▒▒ scribe pilot programme in Middlemore Hospital ED

- Implementation phase over the last three weeks with five early adopters (Super Users)

- Since the approval for 50+ licences for the ED medical team on 14 October, the programme has now been rolled out further to include senior medical officers (SMOs), medical officers of special scale (MOSS), advanced practice nurses and the registered medical officer (RMO) team

- Over the next four weeks the team will ensure these users are logged in and comfortable using the tool. They will then track measures including uptake and clinician acceptance, with a focus on enhanced productivity.

Clinician impressions of the advantages of ▒▒▒

- In general, ▒▒▒ note is better than your own note

- It is easy to copy and paste into a discharge summary

- The whole consultation done in Mandarin comes out in English just as accurately!

- Copying and pasting patient contents into the "context" tab can improve the output

- ▒▒▒ appears to be able to interpret my examination by what I am asking the patient to do and correctly worked out that I was doing a Phalen's test and a Tinel's test and recorded the results

- Can create templates

Clinician impressions of the disadvantages of ▮▮▮

- Occasionally overstates impressions, less nuance

- Occasionally mishears words

- Still need to read your note carefully.

- Concern may impact development of clinical reasoning in less experienced staff

Outcome of the Middlemore ED pilot programme:

- The five users reported enhanced productivity as measured by patients seen per shift

- Rich data capture of clinical conversations

- Allows more time for complex clinical decision-making

- Reduction in clinician cognitive load

- A 'game-changer' that will enhance new models of care

Appendix 1: Runsheet and location map

Time	Details	Minister's Office notes
2.15pm	Minister's Senior Press Secretary and One News arrive Met by Dr Vanessa Thornton, Dr Jeremy Dryden and Yvette Hallam. [NB: There is construction work going on around ED entrance so signage/instructions will need to be followed]	Address: 100 Hospital Road, Otahuhu, Auckland 2025
2.30pm	Minister arrives	
	Brief tour through ED and meet-and-greet ED staff [NB: Will depend on rostering and the clinical situation on the day. Media will not be permitted to film in clinical areas with patients and staff]	
	Discussion with key senior ED staff about the Heidi AI scribe pilot and Middlemore Hospital ED's experience with the tool	
	Mock consult with Minister Brown and Dr Jeremy Dryden/Dr Sarah Bowker/Dr Brett Gerrard to demonstrate Heidi [NB: Media will be permitted to film the mock consult]	
3.15pm	Minister Brown departs	

Appendix 1: Runsheet and location map

Appendix 2: Health targets

Note the Health targets – factsheets – Q4 2024/25 has been provided as separate document.

Counties Manukau specific data will be provided separate to this event briefing.

Appendix 3: Communications Approach – AI Scribe

Attached as a separate document.

Appendix 2 can be found on the Health New Zealand website at:
https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/publications/health-targets-performance-resources-202425

Appendix 3 has been withheld in full.