



Patient Records when a patient transfers to a new practice:

Are you required to send/accept both electronic and hard copy records?

Short Answer

The practice newly enrolling the patient is obliged to accept the paper notes along with the electronic records, if the patient has consented to the transfer of records.

At this point in time **both** hard copy and electronic notes are acceptable to be sent and received and should be accepted by Practices.

Recommendation from Te Whatu Ora

While not explicitly mandated in legislation, it's strongly recommended, and is the industry standard in New Zealand, that GP records be transferred electronically via GP2GP when a patient changes their general practitioner. This method ensures a more secure and efficient transfer, reducing the risk of errors and delays compared to manual methods like hard copies. However, as mentioned, this is not mandatory.

On its website The Royal New Zealand College of GPs discusses New Patient Records, and states *"Patients and practices need assurance that any hard copy health information transferred between providers reaches the intended recipient. Information management to track health records may be in an electronic or hard copy format."* See <https://www.rnzcgp.org.nz/running-a-practice/the-foundation-standard/turoro-patients/23-newly-enrolled-patient-records/>

The Medical Council also states in Section 19 of its Managing Patient Records information newsletter, issued December 2020 (attached), *"Patients' records should be transferred by secure electronic systems **or by registered mail**. These secure methods create an audit trail so that the records can be tracked if they go missing."*

Patient Enrolment Form

The enrolment form clearly states the patient's wish to transfer their records by ticking the 'transfer my records' box.

Transfer of Records	In order to get the best care possible I agree to the Practice obtaining my records from my previous Doctor. I also understand that I will be removed from their practice register, as I am only able to be enrolled at one practice at a time in New Zealand.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please request transfer of my records	<input type="checkbox"/> No transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	Previous Doctor and/or Practice Name		Address / Location

Te Whatu Ora Top Tip:

When transferring your hard copy notes, include a covering letter with details from the Medical Council guidelines and the link to The Royal New Zealand College of GPs website.

Links to further information

[MCNZ Managing Patient Records](#)