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To all primary care practitioners

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Dear Colleagues

Re: Secondary care support and referrals.

I am writing to inform you that all routine face to face outpatient appointments have been cancelled by NHS Lothian secondary care services for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to see any referral that is perceived on the basis of triage to be urgent in terms of care need (so for example people who have fallen suffered a dento-alveolar injury, patients where an urgent biopsy might be indicated, referrals marked as "Urgent Suspicious of Cancer" or other urgent referrals to the OMFS team at SJH). All referrals marked as urgent will continue to be triaged by the receiving team so please give as much detail as you can about why you regard a referral as urgent to support our decision making. Apart from that we will NOT be seeing any new patients for advice at the present time.

The rationale for not seeing routine referrals is twofold, firstly to reduce patient footfall through hospital buildings and simultaneously facilitate social distancing among the population and secondly to release our NHS staff to help to support both the delivery of urgent and unscheduled care in dentistry and to support the wider NHS effort to manage the COVID-19 outbreak.

I would be grateful if you could make any patients who you wish to refer that we will not be seeing routine referrals during the outbreak and there will be an inevitable significant back-log when this outbreak is over so, although they will be seen I simply can't give any indication when.

With all my best

Angus Walls, Interim Director of Dentistry, NHS Lothian