



Extended Care Paramedics



Hato Hone
St John

About Extended Care Paramedics

Extended Care Paramedics (ECPs) support patients with urgent, unscheduled primary healthcare needs. An ECP specialises in assessing patients with low acuity conditions and providing treatment for common minor illnesses and injuries in the community. They close the loop with the patient's GP by sending an ambulance care summary following treatment, and can also arrange referrals to other health providers if needed.

For the past ten years, Hato Hone St John has been contracted by several Te Whatu Ora districts and Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) to provide urgent/after-hours care by visiting and treating patients with minor conditions at home. This service has helped communities where there is a shortage of health practitioners, or where there is a need to support both primary care and emergency ambulance services with a skilled ambulance clinician.

In 2020, Hato Hone St John formalised the ECP role and expanded the range of skills and medicines that can be utilised to provide care to patients. Read on to find out how an ECP could support your local health system.

Working with an ECP

An ECP is a registered paramedic that is passionate about community medicine and has completed postgraduate education to specialise in treating patients with non-urgent illnesses and injuries.

As outlined in the following examples, ECPs can help to reduce pressures on the health system both in large, metro cities and in rural and remote areas.

Boosting rural health service capacity

- › The ECP works alongside other clinicians in a primary care team or rural hospital to assess and treat low acuity patients.
- › Helps treat high acuity patients who present to the clinic or hospital.
- › May attend one to two 111 call outs per day to support local ambulance responses in smaller communities which rely on volunteer crewing.

Filling workforce gaps

- › The ECP supports local health services by providing face-to-face care to patients with urgent, unscheduled primary care needs where there is a shortage of other health professionals.
- › Patients are triaged over the phone (for example, by Whakarongorau Aotearoa) and those who need to be seen face-to-face are attended by the ECP.
- › Helps primary health services to provide after-hours care where there is a shortage of GPs and/or nurses, reducing strain on the existing workforce.
- › Supports areas where access to transport or lack of nearby primary care facilities (particularly during evenings and weekends) prevent people from seeking care.

Minimising demand on emergency ambulances and EDs

- › ECP in an urban/metro area responds in a car to patients who phone 111 with minor illnesses or injuries.
- › Frees up emergency ambulances for patients with life-threatening conditions.
- › Improves patient care by treating more people at home, reducing unnecessary ED presentations and connecting the patient with their primary care team for follow-up care.

Reduce demand on the system

Improve system capacity



Provide care closer to home

Fill workforce gaps



Why utilise a Hato Hone St John ECP?

Hato Hone St John has seen a growing trend of more low acuity patients calling 111 each year. As a result, we've developed our Extended Care Paramedic model to provide more appropriate care to these patients in the community.

We have put robust clinical governance processes in place to support the training and clinical practice of ECPs. The Hato Hone Hato Hone St John Clinical Services team is responsible for their clinical supervision and professional practice. ECPs are supported by an ECP Clinical Lead and receive regular education to consolidate their learning and enhance their practice.

Hato Hone St John has developed a comprehensive set of ECP Clinical Procedures and Guidelines (which function as standing orders) to enable ECPs to safely treat patients with common minor illnesses and conditions in the community. These are regularly maintained and updated in line with international best-practice.

Because ECPs are employed by Hato Hone St John, we take care of any employment administration, such as payroll, and are responsible for their safety and wellbeing.

As a key part of New Zealand's health system, Hato Hone St John is aiming to work more closely with other health providers to keep patients healthy and well, and to make sure they have timely access to care. We believe that ECPs are crucial to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time and the right place.

The ECP visits patients at home enabling them to easily access the care they need and preserving the Hāwera emergency department for true emergencies.

Justin Butcher, Chief Executive, Pinnacle Midlands Health Network

Get in touch

To find out more and discuss whether the ECP model could work for you, please contact paramediccontracts@stjohn.org.nz



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