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## Paper trails to patient tales: 26 years of healing at Bulls Medical Centre

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Gone are the days of handwritten files and patient notes [Image: Aaron Burden on Unsplash]

From pen-and-paper to computerised systems, **Karen Greer** on the heart of rural practice: compassion, community and patientcentred care

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As a practice manager with 26 years of experience at Bulls Medical Centre, I have witnessed a remarkable evolution in healthcare administration. The transition from pen-and-paper invoicing to computerised systems has undoubtedly streamlined processes and improved efficiency.

My reminiscences of the past paint a vivid picture: the tiny cards for accounts, the manual generation of ACC, GMS and immunisation claims, and the delightful round filing shelving where paper files spun around. The Dictaphone era, complete with mumbling directors and carrot-crunching, seems like a charming memory.

Y2K, the infamous bug that kept everyone on their toes, led to some interesting decisions. Our foresight in purchasing a generator paid off, even though Y2K didn't cause the chaos many feared. Those cartons of candles found a new purpose in a local church – a heart-warming gesture.

What truly sets rural practices apart is the close-knit relationship with patients. Knowing them by name, understanding their needs, and going the extra mile – like personally driving elderly patients' home – creates a sense of community. Our team's compassion shines through, whether celebrating new life or cherishing memories of those who've passed away.

Our dedication is clear, and it uplifts us as a team to go above and beyond for our community. Our flexibility and willingness to help are invaluable, especially in a rural setting where patients often rely on the local practice as a lifeline.

Primary health can be challenging, with its share of stress and administrative complexities. But amid it all, the true reward lies in patient care – the moments when you make a difference in someone's life. When you prioritise patients over politics, you create a healing environment that transcends paperwork and regulations.

We will keep nurturing the sense of community, celebrating new beginnings and cherishing memories.

Our team's compassion and commitment make all the difference.

***Karen Greer is on the Practice Managers and Administrators Association of New Zealand executive committee***

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