Rheumatoid arthritis and hand-function problems: referral

Assume that today's date is 5 November 2026. Ms Cakobau has attended the outpatient support clinic today. This is original independent practice material. You are a registered nurse in an outpatient support clinic. Using the case notes, write a referral letter to Ms Tara Boylan, Rheumatology Specialist Nurse, requesting practical medicine-use support and assessment of Ms Akanisi Cakobau's hand difficulties. Address the letter to Ms Tara Boylan, Rheumatology Specialist Nurse, Rheumatology Clinic, 24 Station Road, NSW 2000, Australia. In your answer: expand the relevant notes into complete sentences; do not use note form; use letter format. The body of the letter should be approximately 180–200 words.

Choose one box per line: I = Include / C = Compress / O = Omit. Answers and reasons are on the webpage (scan QR).

	I	C	O
Patient details			
1. Name: Ms Akanisi Cakobau	☐	☐	☐
2. DOB: 18/03/1968 (58 yrs)	☐	☐	☐
3. Review: outpatient support clinic, 05/11/26	☐	☐	☐
4. Referral discussed; pt consents	☐	☐	☐
Social background			
5. Lives alone; daughter visits most evenings; keen to remain independent with medicines	☐	☐	☐
6. Independent with washing and walking; buttons increasingly difficult; prepares simple meals without help	☐	☐	☐
7. Retired accounts clerk; enjoys radio quizzes	☐	☐	☐
8. Daughter privately mentioned an unrelated dispute over inheritance	☐	☐	☐
Medical history			
9. RA diagnosed 2022; rheumatology follow-up ongoing	☐	☐	☐
10. Hydroxychloroquine prescribed by rheumatologist; no recent medicine changes	☐	☐	☐
11. No known drug allergies	☐	☐	☐
12. Appendicectomy 1998; uncomplicated	☐	☐	☐
Assessment			
13. Bilateral hand stiffness ↑ over 3/52; mornings worst	☐	☐	☐
14. Difficulty gripping cups and turning keys; no recent injury	☐	☐	☐
15. Today: alert, afebrile; no acutely hot, red joint	☐	☐	☐
16. Observed: unable to open medicine bottle or push tablets from blister	☐	☐	☐
Assessment			
17. Reports two missed hydroxychloroquine doses last week because packaging inaccessible	☐	☐	☐
18. Can read labels and explain prescribed regimen correctly; no reported confusion about instructions	☐	☐	☐
19. Denies nausea, rash or other new medicine symptoms	☐	☐	☐
20. Daughter currently assists with packaging but cannot attend every day	☐	☐	☐
Treatment/Progress			
21. Last rheumatology review 14/09/26; no treatment changes advised	☐	☐	☐
22. Pt worried: stiffness means tablets have stopped working	☐	☐	☐
23. Current disease activity not established; no conclusion about treatment failure	☐	☐	☐
24. Requested stronger tablets; no changes made at this clinic	☐	☐	☐
25. Complained receptionist sounded bored during booking	☐	☐	☐
26. Temporary pharmacy assistance arranged today; pt can obtain today's prescribed medicine	☐	☐	☐
Plan			
27. Refer for practical medicine-use support: assess opening aids and pharmacist-approved accessible packaging	☐	☐	☐
28. Request hand-function/disease-activity assessment; discuss findings with rheumatologist, who retains prescribing	☐	☐	☐
29. Consider occupational therapy for joint protection and daily-task adaptations	☐	☐	☐
30. Pt advised to contact treating team if symptoms worsen or medicine access fails	☐	☐	☐