



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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24 December 2018

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RE Official information request WCDHB 9257

We refer to your email dated 10 December 2018 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding how widely used fax machines are in New Zealand's public health system. Specifically:

In relation to photocopiers and multifunction machines, please only consider these a fax machine for the purpose of this request where the machine is actually connected to a phone line.

1. The number of fax machines owned by the DHB?

West Coast DHB uses up to 20 fax machines – some of these are multifunction devices and not solely used as a fax machine.

2. The number of fax machines purchased in the 2017/18 financial year, and the cost of the same?

No new machines were purchased during the last financial year.

3. whether facsimile are regularly used in your DHB's hospitals, and if so, what for (we seek only a general description of the clinical, or administrative processes that rely on sending or receiving facsimile on a day-to-day basis); and

Fax machines are still used as a form of communication, but fax use is being phased out as technology advancements become more embedded. Facsimiles are not used a communication device internally, West Coast DHB have these lines to enable external parties to communicate with the West Coast DHB.

Pharmacies receive a lot of prescriptions via fax. In fact, it's the main way pharmacies receive scripts other than by hand from a patient. Correspondingly a lot of GPs will send referrals (Rxs) via fax also. For example, all (99% of) the prescriptions written by the South Westland practice are received by fax to Westland Pharmacy and delivered back to Hari Hari, Fox, Franz etc. An exception would be if the patient happened to be travelling 'to town'. I assume the same would be true for Ngakawau and Karamea in the North.

Our reliance on faxes for supplying medicines to Aged Residential Care has decreased since the advent of cloud based charting systems such as Medi-map.

4. any advice, analysis or planning documents in the last 12 months about phasing facsimile out by upgrading to more modern IT systems.

West Coast DHB does not have any advice, analysis or planning documents over the last 12 months in relation to phasing out facsimile.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gullery', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Carolyn Gullery
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support