



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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19 December 2019

9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9378

I refer to your email, dated 26 November 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding chronic pain services for the population of our district health board. Specifically:

1. **Are chronic pain services separately funded by the DHB? If so please provided data on:**
 - **Budgeted and actual expenditure in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019**
 - **Number of pain specialists/consultants employed by the DHB**
 - **Number of patients (both non-ACC and ACC patients) who received services in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019**
 - **Average waiting times for an appointment following referral from a GP or other health practitioner**
 - **Makeup and dedicated FTE of the multidisciplinary team workforce.**

Chronic pain services are not separately funded nor provided as a distinct service within the West Coast District Health Board. Both ACC and non-ACC patients from the West Coast with chronic pain are generally referred to, and have care provided by, the tertiary pain services at Burwood Hospital in Christchurch services. Please refer to the Canterbury DHB response to this Official Information Act request in regard to the regional tertiary services that they provide in this regard.

Services for people with acute pain who present at the West Coast DHB are variously managed within the respective service departments aligned to their medical or surgical condition. This may be through a combination of medication therapies, physiotherapy, surgical intervention, anaesthetic treatments, etc.

2. **If there is no chronic pain service, please provide information on:**
 - **Where patients are referred to, and the average waiting times for assessment and treatment in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019**
 - **Number of patients referred for services out of the district in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.**

As above, West Coast domiciled patients with chronic pain are generally referred to the Pain Service at Burwood Hospital in Christchurch.

For those West Coast patients referred for advice, first specialist assessment, allied health treatment, multi-disciplinary meetings, and for tests and investigations, the numbers referred out of district to

Burwood Hospital and average waiting times to assessment or treatment in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (both non-ACC and ACC patients) were as follows in **Table one** (below):

Table one:

Financial Year Period	Number of referrals	Average waiting days
2017/18	34	78.4
2018/19	65	107.7

3. What steps is the DHB taking to improve chronic pain services?

West Coast DHB clinicians are working with the Pain Service to video-conference in to the sessions that they hold for patients to enable some of our clinicians at this point to gain further education about pain. The longer term plan is to also enable patients to attend via video-conference from here where appropriate.

Periodic training is undertaken by West Coast DHB clinical staff to provide outreach support for patients with chronic and acute pain. Most recently, a day-long training session in essential pain management was held in Greymouth in September 2019; hosted by a Consultant Specialist in palliative care. The day was highly successful, with training provided to 30 clinicians and caregivers.

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



Carolyn Gullery
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support