



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

Corporate Office
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24 August 2020

9(2)(a)

RE Official information request WCDHB 9460

I refer to your email dated 4 August 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB. Specifically:

- 1. Does the Board have a policy to prioritise Maori and/or Pasifika patients on elective surgery waiting lists?**
- 2. If so, how long has this policy been in force and when is it scheduled to end?**
- 3. If so, what is the rationale for this policy?**
- 4. If so, is the policy based on the pressures of deferred surgery due to COVID-19?**
- 5. If there is no such policy, why has the Board not followed the lead of the Capital and Coast District Health Board?**
- 6. What is the current number of deferred elective surgeries due to the pressures of COVID-19?**

Response:

In answer to questions 1 to 5 above: While acutely aware and mindful of the fact that issues of access to health care and delays that may occur between primary and secondary care create considerable difficulties and inequities that impact on health status, the West Coast DHB does not have a policy to prioritise Maori and/or Pasifika patients on elective surgery waiting lists. Prioritisation for elective surgery and placement on the waiting lists is determined by Consultant Specialists through their professional clinical review and assessment of each individual patient, with consideration given to relative clinical need and urgency.

West Coast DHB has a focus in endeavouring to improve access to health care and equity for our populations through early engagement and linking with primary health care and social support agencies. This work is closely supported by the West Coast PHO and by Poutini Waiora, our local Maori health service provider. Both of these organisations work across the West Coast district.

In answer to question 6 above: There are no individual patients who had surgery deferred at West Coast DHB's surgical services directly due to the Covid 19 pandemic response Alert Level 4 to 3 lockdowns of the March-May 2020 period who have still to have their elective surgery undertaken. All such cases from that period have since been provided with surgery.

During the Covid-19 Alert Level lockdown period itself, there were some 331 elective surgery and endoscopic surveillance cases delayed – either by theatre session cancellations by the West Coast DHB, or deferred at patients' own requests. No urgent elective surgery cases were cancelled or delayed due to the Covid19 lockdown at West Coast DHB. Provision was made to allow urgent elective procedures to continue during the lock-down period. Delays to those patients with current waiting times over 120 days for surgery on our surgical waiting lists are due to circumstances other than Covid 19.

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 'Carolyn Gullery', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carolyn Gullery
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support