



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

Corporate Office
High Street, Greymouth 7840

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27 November 2020

9(2)(a)

RE Official information request WCDHB 9496

I refer to your email dated 18 November 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB. Specifically:

I request the following information under the Official Information Act, about the part-charge to patients for ambulance transfers from Buller to Grey hospital.

- 1. Who introduced the charge (the DHB or St John), when and why?***
- 2. In total, how many patients were charged and why were some charged and not others (excluding those covered by ACC)?***
- 3. Will those who paid be reimbursed (and how many were there) and will those who refused to pay have their accounts scrapped (and how many were there)?***
- 4. Why was the charge not publicised?***
- 5. Why were patients not told of the charge before their transfer***
- 6. Were patients transferred from Reefton Hospital to Greymouth Hospital also charged? If so, how many? If not, why not?***
- 7. Why were some patients transferred by helicopter billed for an ambulance?***

The West Coast DHB does not operate ambulance or helicopter services for transfer of people on the West Coast. These services are operated by St John and by Garden City Helicopters. Consequently, we do not hold any information at all relating to charges or part-charges levied by other agencies. We therefore decline your request under Section 18(g) of the Official Information Act i.e. "... that the information requested is not held" by the West Coast DHB.

The West Coast DHB does not charge individuals for patient ambulance transfers, except where cases may be related to people from other countries who do not hold eligibility for receiving free public health care services in New Zealand.

You may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek a review of our decision to withhold information by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz; or Freephone 0800 802 602.

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

Ralph La Salle
Acting Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support