



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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5 February 2021

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RE Official information request WCDHB 9519

I refer to your email dated 19 January 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB, specifically:

- **For 2020, the number of screens for diabetic retinopathy purchased, the number of screens delivered, and the DNA rate.**

West Coast DHB funds the West Coast PHO to provide a diabetes retinal screening service for people across our district as part of wider funding for supporting our communities, rather than funding a specific number of screens. This free service is provided by way of a visiting service by clinicians who come to the West Coast four times per year who conduct week-long clinics at the major centres across the West Coast:

- March - Greymouth/South Westland/Hokitika
- June - Westport/Karamea/ Reefton
- August - Reefton/South Westland/Hokitika/Greymouth
- November - South Westland/Hokitika/Greymouth

The diabetic retinopathy clinics conducted in main towns are usually run as Enhanced Retinal Screening clinics - these look to have a full diabetes care package available to patients while they are waiting for their eye appointment; with health professionals including a diabetes nurse specialist, Green Prescription Coordinator, Dietician and the West Coast PHO health promoter present for direct patient consultation.

For those diabetic retinopathy clinics conducted in 2020, a total of 503 people attended, 499 were screened, 44 cancelled and 66 who were given appointments did not attend.

The West Coast PHO is looking at conducting an extra retinal screening week-long clinic in 2021 due to the current back log and also due to the increase in diabetes diagnosed numbers of people.

- **The estimated number of people living with diabetes within the DHB.**

There are estimated to be 1,268 people currently living with diabetes in the West Coast DHB district.

- **How many diabetic retinopathy screening episodes were delivered during lockdown, and how long any disruption lasted (i.e. when did screening return to 'normal').**

There was no disruption to the scheduled Retinal Screening programme from the Covid-19 lockdowns as no visiting retinal screening clinics had been planned to have been conducted within this period. Scheduled visiting clinics were held just prior to lockdown in March and another following lockdown in June as planned.

It is unknown if or how many patients may have had screening done privately with their eye specialists at their own behest during the lock-down periods. This information will be progressively updated as people are contacted at recall to be offered an appointment at the retinal screening service as their review dates come up.

- ***On January 1 2021, how many new referrals were on the wait list for their first screening visit, the average time spent on this wait list, and the longest individual time spent waiting.***

As at 1 January 2021, there were 27 new referrals on the wait list for their first screening visit. The average waiting time spent by those on this wait list was 3 months, and the longest an individual patient had spent on the waiting list was at 6 months.

- ***On January 1 2021, how many existing patients were overdue for their follow up screening appointment, the average overdue time, and the longest individual time overdue.***

We note a caution in interpretation of the following data relating to the numbers of existing patient concurrently recorded as being overdue for 2-year review. As at 1 January 2021, there were 229 people noted as overdue for follow-up screening, with an average overdue time among this group of 6 months and the longest time for an individual patient overdue at 19 months. However, there are a number of factors relating to these raw numbers that need to be noted and taken into context. Firstly, these numbers include patients who do not wish to come in for review as well as those who have been offered an appointment for review but not turned up. Secondly, the timeframes for overdue at two years is now getting blurred as some people with indications for well-managed diabetes who have stable HbA1c levels and no retinopathy moving to 3-year screening timeframes by our optometrists. Conversely, those experiencing changes or deterioration being seen sooner and more regularly at 6 months, 12 months, or 18 months review.

As noted above, the West Coast PHO is looking at conducting an extra retinal screening week-long clinic in 2021 due to the current back log and due to the increase in diabetes diagnosed numbers of people.

I trust 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



Ralph La Salle
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Planning, Funding & Decision Support