



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

Corporate Office
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26 March 2021

9(2)(a)

RE Official information request WCDHB 9534

I refer to your email dated 17 March 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding the rise in the use of nitrous oxide, also known as NOS, whippets, nangs and laughing gas. Specifically:

1. **The number of people per month over the last two years who have been seen in your emergency department in relation to the use of nitrous oxide.**
2. **The number of people per month over the last two years who have been admitted to hospital as a result of the use of nitrous oxide.**
3. **The age, gender and ethnicity of people per month over the last two years who have been seen in your emergency department in relation to the use of nitrous oxide.**

West Coast DHB does not code emergency department presentations nor inpatient admissions to a level that would indicate specific use or misuse of nitrous oxide. The only record of such information is that held in hand-written narrative format within individual clinical case notes and patient records, as may be pertinent to the individual patient concerned.

There were approximately 11,000 patients seen through our Emergency Department at Grey Hospital and 7,503 patients discharged from our inpatient services in 2020, and to determine the information you have requested we would need to manually review each individual patients' case notes for the last two calendar years. We therefore decline to provide this information that under Section 18 (f) of the Official Information Act i.e. "... that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research."

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