



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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8 June 2021

9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9556

I refer to your email dated 4 April 2021 to Ministry of Health which they subsequently transferred to us on 12 May 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB. Specifically:

- 1. A summary of the costs of hospital intensive care services provided to those not entitled to NZ free health care (ineligible patients).**
 - a. The cost summary should include reference to the number of days or hours in intensive care.**
 - b. Information to cover the last three years.**

West Coast DHB does not have an intensive care unit, although does have a critical care unit which incorporates an intensive care function at a secondary care level.

West Coast DHB does not operate a costing system to allow us to track expenditure to the level of detail for each inpatient event. It is not possible for us to determine the specific input costs for each individual patient who spends time in our critical care unit, as these will inevitably vary from patient to patient, dependent on their specific condition, acuity and the highly variable nature of individualised treatment care that they may require. Additionally, many patients get transferred to care in general wards during the course of their hospitalisation rather than spend the whole of their stay in beds in the critical care unit. We therefore decline to provide information on the cost summary section of 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, and additionally under Section 18 (f) of the Official Information Act i.e. *"... that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research."*

We can, however, provide you with the number of hours of stay spent in our critical care unit for people who were not entitled to free health care in New Zealand over the past three years. The accumulated hours of these patients were as follows:

- 2018 – 160 accumulated hours for the year. (7 individuals)
- 2019 – 70 accumulated hours for the year. (3 individuals)
- 2020 – 43 accumulated hours for the year. (2 individuals)

We note that visitors from overseas who have accidents while in New Zealand are covered by ACC and eligible for free health care related to their injury as part of this scheme. Additionally, residents of

Australia and the United Kingdom who have to be admitted acutely to hospital services are also eligible for free treatment related to their acute health care event under the Reciprocity Treaty agreements that these nations share with New Zealand. These are excluded from our response.

I trust this satisfies your interest in this matter.

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