



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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1 February 2022

9(2)(a)



RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9645

I refer to your email dated 10 December 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding gender affirming healthcare. Specifically:

1. Please advise (Y/N) whether the following gender-affirming healthcare treatments are provided by your DHB for transgender patients:

Treatment	Yes	No	Notes
Voice therapy / vocal training	Yes		See notes below
Permanent facial hair removal by electrolysis, IPL, or laser treatment		No	
Chest binding prosthetics (binders).		No	
Chest reconstruction (double mastectomy & contouring for transgender men).		No	
Breast augmentation for transgender women		No	
Fertility preservation for sperm		No	
Fertility reservation for eggs		No	
GnRH Puberty suppressants (puberty blockade)		No	See notes below
Readiness assessment for hormone therapy	Yes		See notes below
Hormone therapy (estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone treatment)	Yes		
Hysterectomy and oophorectomy	Yes		See notes below
Orchidectomy / orchiectomy	Yes		See notes below
DHB public pathway to care			See notes below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidelines for clinicians are available on Community HealthPathways; a secure password-protected website.• Information for the public is available on HealthInfo > Gender Identity. Website: www.healthinfo.org.nz

West Coast DHB locally delivered services relating to gender affirming healthcare include provision of hormone replacement therapy, hysterectomy, orchiectomy, voice training (through speech language therapists) and

mental health counselling. These services are all generic services available to our population, not specifically dedicated or related to transgender health care alone. They do, however, have pathways to help support transgender health care. Our speech therapy service does have a very small number of people for whom they work with to provide voice training services in respect of their transgender health care support. Our local mental health services are generic and not specifically tailored to transgender services. The services that they do provide, however, recognise higher rates of depression, insecurity and anxiety experienced among people who need mental health counselling and support relating to transgender issues; as well as help for those who adopt secondary maladjusted coping strategies such as drug and alcohol addictions.

Individuals who seek more specialised transgender related or gender reassignment related health care services from among the list of services outlined above are generally referred primarily to Canterbury DHB, but in some cases also to Auckland DHB. Services provided for West Coast residents in these tertiary health care centres are funded by the West Coast DHB as part of wider inter-district flow and tertiary services funding.

West Coast DHB provides paediatric inpatient and outpatient services, as well as child and adolescent outpatient and community mental health services; however, none are dedicated to being transgender specific.

West Coast DHB has a series of clinical and referral guidelines outlined electronically on our West Coast Healthpathways system, including a suite of pathways about transgender health. Healthpathways guidelines for clinicians are in place for underage persons who present for transgender health care, with referral to tertiary services in Canterbury DHB to access early interventions during pre-puberty and early puberty, as timeliness is particularly important for long-term physical and mental health outcomes.

Guidelines for Clinicians and Public:

As noted above, a series of clinical and referral guidelines is outlined electronically and is available to clinicians on our West Coast Healthpathways system, including pathways about transgender health. Access to this system is limited to health professionals working within the West Coast Health System. The information in these pathway supports clinicians to prescribe, refer and monitor gender-affirming health requests and treatment for children, youth and adults according to agreed ways of working in the West Coast and Canterbury DHBs.

Additionally, HealthInfo for Te Tai Poutini has a set of pages about gender identity (*ira tangata tuakiri*): <https://www.healthinfo.org.nz/WestCoast/index.htm?gender-identity.htm> although the support networks and guideline links on this page mainly refers to services provided by organisations based off the West Coast.

2. Are gender-affirming healthcare services under your DHB based on the Guidelines for Gender Affirming Healthcare for Gender Diverse and Transgender Children, Young People and Adults in Aotearoa New Zealand (2018)? If not, which guidelines are they based on, if any?

West Coast DHB follows the same pathway requirements as Canterbury DHB for accessing transgender health care services. Canterbury DHB use the Oliphant (2018) Guidelines for gender affirming health care, and these have been used to inform the clinical Healthpathways relating to transgender health care services of both DHBs. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) guidelines are also taken into account as part of this pathway development.

Readiness assessments are covered within these guidelines, with assessments being undertaken by an appropriate psychologist or psychiatrist with experience in gender dysphoria before referral can be made to secondary care services in Canterbury DHB.

3. Are there transgender training programmes routinely provided or promoted through your DHB? If so, which training programmes or materials are used, and which organisations provide these? If not, do you have mechanisms for providing or promoting such training, and is there a date by which you plan to provide these?

There are no current plans for delivering training programmes in this regard.

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 'RLS', followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Ralph La Salle
Senior Manager, OIAs
Planning, Funding & Decision Support