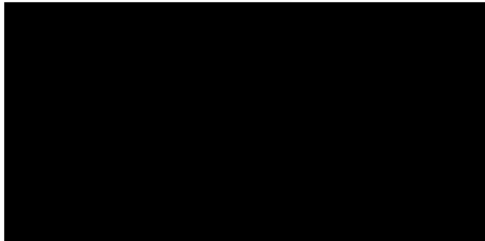


15 July 2021



Re: Official Information Act request – Funded treatments for gender dysphoria

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 17 June 2021 requesting the following information:

I am writing to request the following information under the Official Information Act in a fully searchable format:

1. How many people were referred to the DHB for gender reassignment hormone therapy in each calendar year since 2006 until the present time?
2. What was the breakdown of ages in each of those years (youngest/oldest/median age)?
3. How many were transitioning male to female and how many female to male in each of those years?
4. How many children were referred for puberty blocking drugs in each calendar year since 2006?
5. How many people had psychological treatment for gender dysphoria in each calendar year since 2006?
6. How many people had double mastectomies (top surgery) as treatment for gender dysphoria in each calendar year since 2006?
7. What was the breakdown of ages in each of those years?

RESPONSE

Gender-affirming care across the metro Auckland region is delivered by two services:

- Auckland Sexual Health Regional Service (ASHRS) for adults is provided by Auckland DHB
- The Centre for Youth Health (CFYH) is for young people aged 12-24 years and is provided by Counties Manukau Health.

Both services offer clinics across metro Auckland to the populations of Waitematā, Auckland and Counties Manukau DHBs.

The number of people from the Auckland DHB catchment area who have been referred for gender-affirming healthcare has been extracted from the databases of these services from 1 July 2015 onwards, when financial year reporting requirements were put in place. Prior to 2014, there was no diagnosis code for gender dysphoria and, therefore, there is no centralised database of information.

Reporting the number of referrals prior to this would require substantial manual review of individual clinical records of patients as electronic coding for gender-affirming healthcare was not available before this.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request from 2006 until 1 July 2015 under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

However, we can provide information that is accessible through electronic coding, service reporting or information prepared in response to other Official Information Act (OIA) requests.

Consequently, the information provided below has some limitations, which is noted alongside the relevant data. Some data may not be available for one service but is available for others. Where applicable, this has also been noted below.

We also note that your query seeks information on referrals for hormone therapy. The available data is based on the total number of patients accessing gender-affirming care.

Therefore, a cohort who have been referred for gender-affirming care, but are not receiving hormone therapy, may be included in each data point below. This is most notable for the CfYH, where it is common for patients to be solely on hormone blockers but not receiving gender reassignment hormone therapy.

Auckland DHB follows the Northern Region Guidelines for Gender-affirming Healthcare for Gender Diverse and Transgender Children, Young People and Adults. The details can be found through the following link:

<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/hauora-tahine-pathways-to-transgender-healthcare/>

1. How many people were referred to the DHB for gender reassignment hormone therapy in each calendar year since 2006 until the present time?

As noted above, the number of people from Auckland DHB's population who have been referred for gender-affirming healthcare has been extracted from the CfYH and ASHRS databases from 1 July 2015.

The calendar year data you have requested is not available before 2018 as this information was previously reported by financial year only. From 2018 onwards reporting requirements changed and the information is now provided by calendar year. For this reason, we have provided financial year data up to 2017/18 and the calendar year data you have requested from 2018 onwards.

These numbers represent how many people have accessed services for the purpose of receiving gender-affirming medical care at either the youth or adult service, which may include hormone therapy. We note these numbers may underestimate the true number of people receiving hormone therapy, as some referrals are received by other services. These other referrals are not coded electronically.

The number of people from Auckland DHB's population referred for gender-affirming medical care* in each calendar year from 1 July 2015 - 31 December 2020

| | 2015/16** | 2016/17** | 2017/18** | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Auckland DHB | 29 | 69 | 97 | 278 | 346 | 305 |

**Gender-affirming medical care may include hormone therapy.*

***Financial year data 1 July to 30 June data. (Remaining data from 2018-2020 provides calendar year data from 1 January to 31 December.) Please note that some data for the 2017/2018 FY and the 2018 calendar year may be double-counted.*

Increases in numbers from the 2015-2017 period to the 2018-2020 period are likely due to a change in service provision since 2016/17 when services became available through CFYH to young people living in the Auckland DHB area. As a result, a diagnosis code for transgender services at GP practices is now available, allowing for improved data collection. In addition, there is typically an upward track for a few years in any new service offered before numbers plateau. This reflects information being shared about a new service's availability and acceptability.

2. What was the breakdown of ages in each of those years (youngest/oldest/median age)?

The numbers below are inclusive of all people referred to and seen by either the youth or adult service. It includes those who have been referred for gender exploration but have not received hormone therapy.

Referrals received by CFYH for patients younger than 12 years are coded as Under 12 and older patients over 20 years of age are coded as Over 20. Further breakdown of ages Under 12 and Over 20 is not possible without extensive manual review of outpatient medical files.

We have withheld the exact ages of individuals under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982, as withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

However, we have provided the information you have requested in age-bands.

Youngest, oldest and median age of people from Auckland DHB's population who have been referred for gender-affirming medical care* in each calendar year from 2015-2020

| | | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------|----------|----------|-------|----------|----------|
| Auckland DHB | Min age | 15-19 | Under 12 | Under 12 | 15-19 | Under 12 | Under 12 |
| | Max age | 65-69 | 70-74 | 60-64 | 65-69 | 65-69 | 65-69 |
| | Median age | 26 | 24 | 23 | 27 | 28 | 21 |

**Gender-affirming medical care may include hormone therapy.*

As noted above, reporting prior to 2018 was by financial year. Please note that data for the 2017/2018 FY and the 2018 calendar year may be double-counted.

3. How many were transitioning male to female and how many female to male in each of those years?

This service is run on an outpatient basis and is not coded electronically to show if a patient is transitioning from male to female or from female to male. To provide this information would require the review of individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the small number of frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

Information has been compiled on a limited basis for the youth service from 2015/16 onwards, as before this time the service was not provided to young people living in the Auckland DHB catchment area. As also noted in that response, improvements to service provision and electronic coding are reflected in the data provided.

For numbers from 2015 to 2020, we have withheld the information where the numbers are five or less under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982, as withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

Number of Auckland DHB patients within the youth service who are transitioning gender

| | | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|------|------|------|
| Auckland DHB | Male to female | 6 | 15 | 21 | 61 | 47 | 36 |
| | Female to male | ≤5 | 24 | 38 | 111 | 95 | 63 |
| | Non binary | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | 9 | 28 | 7 |

**As noted above, reporting prior to 2018 was by financial year. Please note that some data for the 2017/2018 FY and the 2018 calendar year may be double-counted.*

Further collation of this data is not possible without extensive manual review of outpatient medical files.

4. How many children were referred for puberty blocking drugs in each calendar year since 2006?

See our combined response to question 4 and 5 below.

5. How many people had psychological treatment for gender dysphoria in each calendar year since 2006?

Data on individual treatment, such as the number of people referred for puberty blocking drugs or the number of people who had psychological treatment for gender dysphoria, is not coded and, therefore, is not available in our current reports.

To provide responses to these questions would require the review of individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to these aspects of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

6. How many people had double mastectomies (top surgery) as treatment for gender dysphoria in each calendar year since 2006?

Prior to 2014 there was no diagnosis code for gender dysphoria and, therefore, there is no centralised database of information from 2006 to 2013. To provide the information would require the review of individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the small number of frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to these aspects of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

The figures below, from 2014 to 2020 calendar years, are as accurate as the coding allows and have been obtained via the National Minimum Dataset (NMDs) published on the MoH website at:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collections-and-surveys/collections/national-minimum-dataset-hospital-events>

For numbers from 2014 to 2020, we have withheld the information where the numbers are five or less under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982, as withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

We are able to provide full calendar year data in response to your request as this information is provided via a different reporting system.

The number of patients who had double mastectomies for gender dysphoria by calendar year from 2014 to 2020

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Auckland DHB | ≤5 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | ≤5 | 8 | 13 |

7. What was the breakdown of ages in each of those years?

As above, prior to 2014 there was no diagnosis code for gender dysphoria and, therefore, there is no centralised database of information from 2006 to 2013. To provide the information would require the review of individual clinical records of patients. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

For numbers from 2014 to 2020, we have withheld the information where the numbers are five or less under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982, as withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

We have considered whether the public interest outweighs the need to protect the privacy of individuals and have determined that it does not.


Breakdown of ages of Auckland DHB patients who had double mastectomies for gender dysphoria

| Age bands | 2014 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 15 to 19 | 0 | ≤5 | 0 | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| 20 to 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | 10 |
| 25 to 29 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | ≤5 | 0 |
| 30 to 34 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | ≤5 | 0 |
| 35 to 39 | ≤5 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | ≤5 |
| 40 to 44 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | 0 | 0 |
| 45 to 49 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 50 to 54 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | 0 | 0 |
| 55 to 59 | 0 | 0 | ≤5 | 0 | 0 |

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. 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 Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



M. Wilsher acting CE

Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive of Te Toka Tumai (Auckland District Health Board)