

20 December 2018

**Auckland DHB**  
**Chief Executive's Office**  
Level 1  
Building 37  
Auckland City Hospital  
PO Box 92189  
Victoria Street West  
Auckland 1142

Re **Official Information request for overflow to private hospitals**

I refer to your Official Information Act request of 23 November 2018 for information about

- 1. A breakdown of all instances between January 1 and November 1 2018 where the DHB referred overflow patients in the following departments to private hospitals and clinics in Auckland to the following departments: emergency Department, surgical, diagnostic imaging (such as MRI, CT, PET scans**
- 2. Specify which department the patient was referred from and the purpose of the referral. Please also advise when possible which hospital/clinic the overflow patient was referred to**
- 3. If vouchers are given to overflow patients who are referred to private hospitals and clinics, please advise the number of vouchers given out by the DSHB in this calendar year, broken down by month and by department.**

The information you have requested is enclosed below.

The metro-Auckland DHBs sought (via Waitemata DHB) to clarify how you defined 'overflow' patients. Your definition covered those with 'exceedingly long waiting' times. However, you did not specify a timeframe for those waits. We have interpreted your request as related to any situations where patients are seen by private providers having been referred to the DHB for surgical procedures.

Please note that a referral to an 'outsourced' diagnostic and surgical service is not based on length of an individual's waiting times. Rather, this option is used as part of a wider strategy to best match our overall Auckland DHB health facilities and capacity to the needs of referred individuals, their clinical needs, and service considerations, including timeliness of a necessary intervention. This helps ensure we can also achieve elective surgical and diagnostic access targets required by the Ministry of Health.

- 1. A breakdown of all instances between January 1 and November 1 2018 where the DHB referred overflow patients in the following departments to private hospitals and clinics in Auckland to the following departments: emergency department, surgical, and diagnostic imaging (such as MRI, CT, PET scans.**

## Emergency Department

Auckland DHB does not refer patients presenting for Emergency Care to private providers. Occasionally patients covered by ACC funds receive parts of their care under a private provider.

### Surgical procedures\*

01/01/2018 – 01/11/2018	ADHB Total Funded Patients
Cardiothoracic	3
Orthopaedics	330
Ophthalmology	982
Oral Health	314
ORL	7
Urology	23
Cardiovascular	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1659</b>

\*These procedures are publicly funded and are placed with external providers to access specialised equipment not available in the public system. In some instances, acute cases are transferred to private providers to provide additional capacity.

### Diagnostic imaging MRI, CT, PET, scans

#### Outsourced 01/01/2018-01/11/2018

MRI	1413
PET-CT	651
Mammography	33

Outsourced MRI diagnostic services are part of a capacity planning strategy to cover variations in clinical need and service considerations. It is not based on length of individual waiting times.

PET-CT fall under procedures that are publicly funded and patients are placed with external providers to access specialised equipment not available in the public system

The mammography imaging was to cover for installation of a new machine.

- 2. Specify which department the patient was referred from and the purpose of the referral. Please also advise when possible which hospital/clinic the overflow patient was referred to**

See the surgical and diagnostic tables for the classifications of procedures placed with private providers. The above tables indicate the extent to which private provision is used to ensure Auckland DHB meets expectations in provision of timely healthcare. Tracing the destination and providers for this number of outsourced patients would require substantial research and collation and that information is thus withheld under section 18(f) of the OIA.

- 3. If vouchers are given to overflow patients who are referred to private hospitals and clinics, please advise the number of vouchers given out by the DSHB in this calendar year, broken down by month and by department. Insert original request text here**

Auckland DHB does not have a voucher system.

I trust this information answers your questions.

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](http://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



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
Chief Executive

