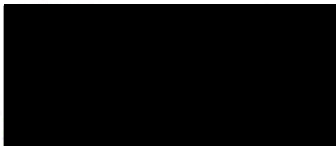




6 September 2018



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – treatment costs for patients ineligible for free public healthcare

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 13 August 2018 seeking data from Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) on the cost of treatment provided to patients ineligible for free publicly-funded healthcare.

Waitemata DHB has the largest resident population of any DHB in New Zealand, currently standing at just over 630,000 people.

Our population is also one of the country's fastest-growing and this is reflected in the ethnic diversity of the Waitemata community. Please bear this in mind if comparing Waitemata data with that of other populations.

Please also note that Waitemata DHB receives no additional funding for the losses that are incurred when non-New Zealand resident charges are not paid.

Nationally, only Auckland DHB and Counties Manukau DHB receive additional funding for bad debts, reflecting that their cost is much higher than the national average cost.

Our responses to your questions are provided below.

- *Could you please give me the total cost of treating patients not eligible for publicly funded care in your DHB in the last year - and compared to the last five years? And how much of that was recouped:*
 - *From the patients/their private insurance*
 - *From the Ministry of Health*
 - *From the DHB's own funds*

Ineligible patients cost recovery (from patient invoicing)

Year	Total invoiced \$	Total paid to date by patient/insurer* \$	Total written-off \$
2014	3,672,645	1,794,427	1,817,202
2015	3,917,831	1,997,183	1,718,891
2016	4,667,153	2,364,012	2,064,115
2017	4,251,270	2,073,683	1,666,493
2018	7,660,324	3,209,624	1,519,093

**Please note that ineligible patients often enter into an agreements with the DHB to repay the cost of providing their healthcare in instalments over time. This is why adding total amounts repaid to date and amounts written-off by the DHB do not align with the total amount invoiced.*

- *Specifically, could you tell me about the number of patients and cost of care for ineligible patients:*
 - *Receiving dialysis*
 - *Receiving treatment for diabetes*
 - *Have other pancreatic issues*
 - *Requiring cardiac care*
 - *Plus the overall cost of services*

Plus the overall cost of translation services.

Due to the nature of our data systems and the way they record information, Waitemata DHB is unable to link invoices with individual diagnosis details without reviewing individual patient records.

We estimate that providing this level of information for the last five years, as requested, would take our specialist DHB data analysts up to 10 weeks of manual research work.

We have considered whether extending the deadline for providing a response, refining your request or charging for the collation time involved would assist us in undertaking this research and have formed the view that it would not as these approaches would not alleviate the need to take key staff away from their normal duties for a considerable period.

On this basis, we have decided to refuse this part of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information requested cannot be made available without significant collation or research.

We interpret your question about translation service costs as relating to the overall cost of providing this service to ineligible patients. The same concerns about significant collation or research, therefore, also apply.

You have the right to seek an independent review of this decision by the Office of the Ombudsman, whose details are available via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Waitemata DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare.

This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Paine', written in a cursive style.

Robert Paine
Chief Financial Officer
Waitemata District Health Board