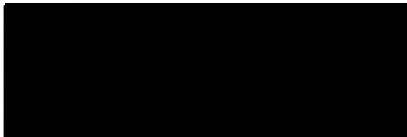




22 August 2018



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – mental health spending due to attempted suicide

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 14 August 2018 seeking the following of Waitemata District Health Board (DHB):

- *I am struggling to identify information on spending on mental health services supporting people who have attempted suicide and would like to make an OIA request about how much of DHB mental health spending goes towards supporting people who have attempted suicide and, if possible, the number of people who were treated under the umbrella of mental health after attempting suicide in the last financial year or equivalent reporting period. This is not referring to hospital admission costs and costs associated with physical injuries.*

In response, I can advise that Waitemata DHB provides treatment to people who have attempted suicide in all of our services, rather than from dedicated services. Therefore, we are unable to calculate or report how much of the DHB's mental health spending goes specifically towards people who have attempted suicide.

On the question of the number of people treated by our Mental Health Services after a suicide attempt, Waitemata DHB does not hold this information in any of our reporting systems because a suicide attempt is not a distinct diagnostic category. Mental health and addictions clinicians document suicide attempts in an individual's clinical record, however, this data cannot be accessed other than by going through all clinical notes. To answer your question it would be necessary to manually review the files of every patient seen in the last financial year to ascertain the number of patients who had attempted suicide.

This would be a significant undertaking as Waitemata DHB operates the country's largest mental health service by volume of service-users seen.

In 2017/18 alone, our services had face-to-face contact with a total of 26,531 distinct service-users. Assuming a review of each patient's file would take approximately 10 minutes, the review process to compile the requested data is likely to take several months to complete.

We have considered whether charging for the time required to collate this information would assist us to manage this request and have formed the view that it would not as it would require clinical staff with a mental health background who are experienced in using our records system

to review the patient files. This would, in turn, impact our ability to meet the needs of our patients.

We have also considered contracting staff in to undertake this work but we also do not see this as a viable option due to a national shortage of experienced mental health staff.

Finally, we have also considered extending the timeframe for responding but formed the view this would also not be of assistance as it would still require taking people away from frontline service-provision.

After careful consideration, we believe there is no option but to decline your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation or research.

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have the right to seek a review from the Office of the Ombudsman, whose details are available via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

We would be happy to arrange a meeting with you to outline the types of information the DHB does hold to assist with any future information requests you may make. To take up this opportunity, please contact [REDACTED]

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



Dr Susanna Galea-Singer
Clinical Director
Mental Health and Addiction Services
Waitemata District Health Board