

01 July 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request - costs for treating patients ineligible for publicly funded health services in New Zealand

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 10 June 2019 seeking the following of Waitematā District Health Board (DHB):

Regarding Waitemata DHB's costs for treating foreigners:

- 1. The total annual costs of treatment for people not eligible for publicly funded health services in New Zealand.*
- 2. Costs for each of the past five financial years, and how much of those yearly costs have been written off as bad debt.*
- 3. For the past financial year only, the cost of the most expensive treatment for a single patient not eligible for publicly funded health services in NZ - and what type of treatment it was.*
- 4. Anything else in the spirit of this request that you think should be included.*

By way of background, Waitematā DHB has the largest resident population of any DHB in New Zealand, currently standing at more than 630,000 people. We have a workforce of more than 7,500 people spread across more than 80 sites across the Waitemata district and beyond.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your specific questions, please see below.

1. Total costs of services as invoiced by Waitematā DHB to people ineligible for publicly funded health services in New Zealand

Financial year (July-June)	Amount (excl. GST)
2013-2014	\$3,455,733.04
2014-2015	\$3,681,575.65
2015-2016	\$4,135,046.96

2016-2017	\$4,133,656.52
2017-2018	\$4,599,780.87

2. The value of invoiced costs above, written-off as bad debt

Financial year (July-June)	Amount (excl. GST)
2013-2014	1,162,443.48
2014-2015	1,610,218.26
2015-2016	2,051,067.83
2016-2017	2,083,966.96
2017-2018	1,773,473.04

3. The cost and type of treatment of the most-expensive treatment for a single patient not eligible for publicly funded health services in New Zealand in 2017/18.

In the last financial year (July 2017-June 2018), the most expensive treatment amount invoiced to a single non-resident patient in Waitematā DHB is just under \$160,000 (excluding GST) for treatment of a medical condition.

We have withheld information about the type of treatment provided to protect the privacy of the patient. This information, coupled with the cost of treatment and the period in which it occurred could render the patient identifiable. Withholding to protect privacy is permitted under s9(2) (a) of the Official Information Act.

You are entitled to complain to the Ombudsman about our decision to withhold this information. The Ombudsman's contact details can be found at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

4. Anything else in the spirit of this request

I believe the responses reflect the spirit of the request.

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Waitematā 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



Simon Watts
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Waitematā District Health Board