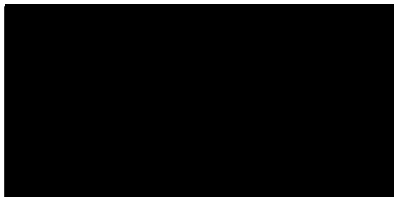




4 November 2019



Dear 

Re: OIA request - debts incurred by ineligible/overseas patients

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 16 October 2019 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about the amount of debt incurred from treating ineligible patients.

To provide some context to assist in the interpretation of the information provided, Waitematā DHB serves an ethnically diverse and rapidly increasing population. We have 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.

In addition, we provide child disability, forensic psychiatric services, pre-school and school dental services, as well as alcohol and drug services to people within the Auckland region on behalf of the other DHBs.

In response to your specific questions, please see below.

1. *The total amount of debt incurred by the DHB in treating ineligible patients or those from overseas for the financial years of 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19.*

Financial year (July-June)	Amount invoiced (excl GST)	Debt written off (excl GST)
2014-2015	\$3,681,575.65	\$1,610,218.26
2015-2016	\$4,135,046.96	\$2,051,067.83
2016-2017	\$4,133,656.52	\$2,083,966.96
2017-2018	\$4,599,780.87	\$1,773,473.04
2018-2019	\$4,829,107.83	\$1,956,280.87

2. *A breakdown of the number of patients who incurred these debts, (the totals as above) for the financial years of 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19.*

Financial year (1st July- 30th June)	Number of non-eligible patients
2014-2015	865
2015-2016	893
2016-2017	961
2017-2018	968
2018-2019	910

3. *Can the DHB then please also advise what happens to these debts incurred by ineligible patients? Are they struck out? Does the DHB cover the costs - how does this process work?*

As required by the Ministry of Health, Waitematā DHB follows a process to recover the costs of hospital services for ineligible patients. Ineligible patients are invoiced, and full settlement is required. When a full settlement is not possible, a payment plan is offered. If the payment plan is not fulfilled, the debt is written off and the account is transferred to a debt collection agency for further recovery. Any payment collected is treated as bad debt recovered and is paid back (less a collection fee) to Waitematā DHB.

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



Robert Paine
Chief Financial Officer
Waitematā District Health Board