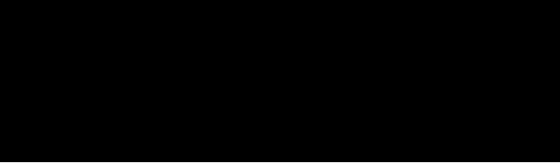




Waitematā
District Health Board
Best Care for Everyone

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13 December 2019



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – medical notes and documents

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 22 November seeking information about patients/clients who receive the medical notes or documents of someone else from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB).

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā DHB serves a population of more than 630,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas, the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 7,500 people across more than 80 different locations.

In addition to providing services to our own population, we are also the metropolitan Auckland provider of forensic psychiatry, child disability services, child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

Our responses to your questions are provided below:

The number of complaints made to the DHB involving a patient/client requesting their medical notes or documents and receiving medical notes or documents relating to someone else, broken down by calendar year for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and to November 1, 2019.

Waitematā DHB has received only one complaint involving a patient or client requesting their medical notes or documents and receiving medical notes or documents relating to someone else between 1 March, 2015 and 1 November, 2019.

Our electronic complaints system only holds information about complaints from 1 March 2015. We have, therefore, not searched between 1 January and 28 February, 2015 but can do so manually if you wish us to.

The number of investigations launched as a result of such complaints for the above years, and a breakdown of the outcomes reached.

As only one complaint was received in 2019, there has been one investigation as a result. In that case, a patient's discharge summary was mailed as a hard copy and included the last page of another patient's discharge summary.

Discharge summaries are not usually posted to patients, but given directly to patients when they are discharged from the Emergency Department. However, the department was extremely busy on this particular day and staff were required to print some discharge summaries off to be posted to patients. This patient was transferred from the Emergency Department to another Waitematā DHB service before the discharge summary was available.

The investigation revealed the error occurred when Emergency Department clerical staff printed off the required batch of discharge summaries on that day to be posted and one page from one patient's discharge summary was folded together with that of another patient.

Emergency Department clerical staff have been reminded not to print discharge summaries in batches and to check that only the information relating to each patient is sent to that patient.

An apology was offered to the person who complained and to the other patient involved, who also received a full copy of their discharge summary. Discharge summaries are automatically emailed to GPs so both patients' GPs received a full copy of their patient's discharge summaries.

Waitematā DHB takes its responsibility to keep patient information confidential very seriously and has policies and procedures in place which are designed to protect patient information.

Our hospitals manage around 120,000 inpatient discharges each year. Please note, events of this nature are extremely rare in that there has been a single such event in the past five years.

The human error which led to a patient receiving another patient's information is very much regretted.

I trust that this information assists you.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community 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 consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Jonathan Christiansen
Chief Medical Officer
Waitematā District Health Board**