

21st May 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request for – Flight Staff & Interhospital Transfers

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 13th April 2021, you requested the following information:

- 1. How many currently registered flight nurses are employed by the DHB?**
- 2. What is the average remuneration of currently registered flight nurses employed by the DHB by qualification and seniority bands?**
- 3. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?**
- 4. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?**
- 5. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?**
- 6. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?**
- 7. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?**
- 8. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?**
- 9. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for fixed wing aircraft?**
- 10. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for rotary wing aircraft?**
- 11. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?**
- 12. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?**
- 13. What advice has the DHB provided to the Simpson Review team relating to patient transfers by aircraft?**
- 14. What growth forecasts has the DHB completed or commissioned relating to interhospital transfer demand?**
- 15. Who is the DHB currently under contract with to provide interhospital transfer by aircraft, when does the contract expire and what right of renewals exist within the contract?**

Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

1. **How many currently registered flight nurses are employed by the DHB?**
CM Health has no registered flight nurses employed by the DHB.
2. **What is the average remuneration of currently registered flight nurses employed by the DHB by qualification and seniority bands?**
Not applicable – as per question 1.

3. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?**
4. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?**

Table 1 below reflects hours charged to CM Health for interhospital flight transfers for fixed wing and rotary wing aircrafts. Please note this is not information we routinely report on or collect and we have not recorded hours of every invoice charged to us.

Financial years	Hours charged for interhospital flight transfers	
	Fixed Wing	Rotary Wing
2017/18	22.09	19.01
2018/19	42.26	9.38
2019/20	20.22	3.95

Table 1: Data Sourced Finance Team

5. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?**
6. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?**

In response to questions 5 and 6 the information can be found below in table 2. It is important to note that the CM Health spend on interhospital transfers and can also include medical and/or nursing staff costs, road transportation costs to and from airports where required, coordination costs and consumable charges etc.

Financial years	Total spend on interhospital flight transfers		
	Fixed Wing	Rotary Wing	N/A
2017/18	\$104,007.63	\$57,156.94	\$4,600.00
2018/19	\$195,873.17	\$32,964.01	\$57,317.34
2019/20	\$99,129.09	\$11,821.00	\$59,565.84

Table 2: Data Sourced Finance Team

7. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?**
8. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?**

We are unable to provide this detail for interhospital transfers as this information is not routinely collected and reported by us. To provide the information you are seeking would require the manual review of each individual record. We have therefore, determined to decline this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 due to substantial collation and research.

9. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for fixed wing aircraft?

10. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for rotary wing aircraft?

In response to questions 9 & 10, CM Health has no specific metrics to measure service performance however NASO service specifications are publicly available on the Ministry of Health website at the following link:

- <https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/national-ambulance-sector-office-naso/emergency-ambulance-services-eas/eas-providers/emergency-ambulance-service-generic-service-agreements>

11. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?

Business rules for cost-sharing with other DHBs for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft is publicly available at the following link. Please refer to Clause 6.13.1 and 6.13.2.

- <https://nsfl.health.govt.nz/accountability/operational-policy-framework-0/operational-policy-framework-202021>

12. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?

CM Health pays the costs of air ambulance transfers as invoiced to us by other DHBs in respect of those patients who are residents of our district.

The following response has been provided by NASO:

NASO establishes the hourly rate and invoices DHBs for the number of interhospital transfers (IHTs) hours flown. This was first established through a variation to the Crown Funding Agreement.

DHBs are responsible for funding their own IHTs; however, there are two exceptions as follows: MoH pays: for urgent IHTs when a patient is transferred from one medical facility to another within three hours of arriving at the first facility. The exception to this is the Northern Region.

ACC pays: for urgent IHTs when a patient is transferred from one publicly-funded hospital to another within 24 hours and the first hospital is not able to meet patient's needs at that time.

Each month, DHBs are sent a list of IHT missions for patients that are domiciled to their DHB (excluding those where the provider indicates the mission should be covered by ACC for an urgent transfer).

The DHB advises if they accept the cost(s) or whether they should be sent elsewhere i.e. Ministry of Health or another DHB.

13. What advice has the DHB provided to the Simpson Review team relating to patient transfers by aircraft?

CM Health has no record of having provided advice relating to patient transfers by aircraft to the Simpson review.

14. What growth forecasts has the DHB completed or commissioned relating to interhospital transfer demand?

CM Health has not completed any growth forecasts in relation to interhospital transfer demand.

15. Who is the DHB currently under contract with to provide interhospital transfer by aircraft, when does the contract expire and what right of renewals exist within the contract?

CM Health does not hold formal contracts with suppliers of interhospital transfer services.

I trust this information answers your request. You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health