21 January 2019

████████████
Reporter (Health)
Stuff/ Fairfax Media
PO Box 6341,
Wellesley St, Auckland, 1140

E-mail: ████████████████████████

Dear ██████████

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 04 December 2018. You requested the following information, and our responses are outlined below each question:

- **Does the DHB have a policy in place regarding the use of smartphones/ smartphone apps (like WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Messenger) for the recording and sharing of clinical information?**
    - *If yes, what is the policy?*
    - *If no, why not?*

Yes, these matters are covered within our policies on clinical Documentation standards, Retention and Destruction of Personal Health Information, the Code of Conduct and Professional standards, as well as policies and guidelines for Acceptable and Safe IT Practices and Safe Mobile Communication Practices.

- **How frequently would you say this is happening among clinicians?**

We do not have any mechanism to quantify instances of this occurring. For clinical related work, clinicians should be using DHB-issued phones, which enable them to share data over a secured network.

- **Is it just a sign of the times; a more efficient way of sharing information?**

CM Health Services recognises the value of using SmartPhone and App technology in a secure environment to improve patient care, and enhance clinical productivity. Our systems already include to aid communication between clinicians. These include secure pager alternative options (via Task Manager), and clinical information visible to teams via the Clinical Portal and digital viewers. We continue to investigate ways to integrate new and emerging options effectively and securely within our health services, including greater use of mobile devices to capture and make information available at the point of care.

- **What efforts are made to ensure patient privacy if/ when sharing information through personal/ work smartphones?**

Ensuring patient privacy and confidentiality is fundamental to our clinical services, and clinicians are very mindful of this in their practice. Our DHB-issued technology and applications are managed to ensure security and encryption via a NZ Government-approved Device Management System. Staff can only access the corporate network using their personal devices via secured connections. We do supply staff with free onsite Wi-Fi connectivity for personal use of their own devices during work hours.

Clinicians may take photos to monitor aspects of their care, and this can be a particularly effective form of communication/ recording progress between clinicians. Taking patient photographs will include consent (written for clinical photography), and clinicians should explain the purpose of these photographs to the patient or guardian. Patients can choose whether, or not the photographs to be used as part of their electronic medical records, used for teaching and training purposes, used in a publication, such as a journal or text book, or a website with public or health practitioner access. Any clinical photographs are then stored within a secure data environment, with access limited to certain users and are added to the patient's health record.

- **Have any clinicians been reprimanded for the way they have used their smartphone/ tablet to record or share patient information?**

There have been no issues of this nature raised with the DHB. Our rules on use of personal devices at work are incorporated into the various DHB IT Acceptable Use Policies.

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,

Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive