

Human Resources : Doctors in Mental Health
Proactive Release : 03 July 2019

19 June 2019

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 04 June 2019. You requested the following information:

- **What is the number, and percentage (the total being full number of funded positions) of your vacancies in mental health doctors (registrars and consultants) in 2018 and 2019?**
- **Is there a strategic plan in place to increase the numbers of mental health doctors, given the increased demands for mental health services, and the recent government budget announcements?**

The Mental Health services at Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) have a Senior Medical Officer (SMO) staff establishment in full time equivalent (FTE) of 60 FTE.

The number of vacancies varies over time, and we use locum, contracted and fixed-term psychiatrists to cover these vacancies. Counting only permanently employed SMO staff by headcount FTE (with a max of 1.0), CM Health has had a vacancy rate of 15 FTE (25%) over the last 2 years.

The Psychiatry Registrar training is a regional programme, hosted by Auckland DHB on behalf of the Northern Region. Across 2018 and 2019, the Registrar training year dates were:

- 2019 Training Year – 10/12/2018 to 09/12/2019
- 2018 Training Year – 11/12/2017 to 09/12/2018

The total funded Registrar positions in Mental Health services and the number that remained vacant at the commencement of each run of the training programme were:

Run Start Date	Position FTE	Vacancy FTE
10/06/2019	16	3 (18.75%)
10/12/2018	16	3 (18.75%)
11/06/2018	17	3 (16.75%)
11/12/2017	17	3 (16.75%)

Vacancies can fluctuate throughout each run rotation, for a number of reasons. These vacancies at run commencement were spread across a variety of Community Mental Health teams. Questions

about vacancy and recruitment issues for this programme, should be directed via <http://www.aucklanddoctors.co.nz/> and http://www.psychtraining.org/RTC_home2.html

CM Health efforts to increase the number of mental health doctors entering the psychiatry training scheme include providing better experiences for Postgraduate Year 1 and Year 2 doctors on House Officer 'rotation runs' in our inpatient mental health units.

The ongoing CM Health plan to increase numbers of mental health doctors includes:

- **Enhancing the local workforce pipeline**, through enhanced recruitment into the regional training programme.
- **Assertive recruitment from overseas**, to attract well-trained and capable Psychiatrists to CM Health.
- **Service-wide enhancements** to the SMOs experience of working here at CM Health – with a focus on providing a high quality, learning culture, addressing equity of health outcomes for the population we serve as a values-driven organisation.

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 Health website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Apa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health