

17 October 2019

9(2)(a)

E-mail: 9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

#### Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 03 October 2019 seeking information on Lymphoedema Services. You requested the following information, and responses for CM Health are below:

1. **Does your DHB currently have a specified lymphoedema services?**
2. **What services are provided for patients with lymphoedema in your DHB?**
3. **How much funding is allocated for lymphoedema services within your DHB annually?**
  - a. *Also, please include % of total budget.*
  - b. *Please provide information for the last 3-5 years.*
4. **How many FTEs are allocated in your DHB for lymphoedema therapists?**
5. **How many lymphoedema therapist position vacancies have you had over the past year?**
6. **Does this service provide publicly funded lymphoedema services for cancer patients/survivors?**
7. **What are the eligibility criteria to access lymphoedema service for cancer patients/survivors in your DHB?**
8. **Please list lymphoedema services/ procedures available/ offered for cancer patients/survivors in your DHB - including education and early signs detection.**
9. **Is there a funded provision for compression garments in your DHB?**
  - a. *If so, please specify what provision is funded.*
  - b. *How many sets of compression garments per year?*
10. **How can cancer patients/survivors access lymphoedema services in your DHB?**
  - a. *Do they need a referral and who can provide the referral?*
11. **What is the average waiting time for cancer patients/ survivors to access lymphoedema services within your DHB?**
12. **If you currently provide a lymphoedema service, what is the current waiting list status in your DHB?**
  - a. *How many people are currently awaiting appointments?*
  - b. *How many days is the waiting list currently at?*
13. **Is there a protocol on pre and post-surgery lymphoedema surveillance in your DHB, and if so could you please provide it?**

For context, Counties Manukau DHB (CMDHB) provides services to meet the health needs of approximately 569,400 people residing in Counties Manukau and Franklin district. This includes both hospital and community services, as well as working with primary health and NGO providers to deliver health and support services to our community. Counties Manukau has significant ethnic and cultural diversity, and high health needs. We also provide regional and specialist services for Burns/ Plastics Surgery and for Orthopaedic/ Spinal services.

All these factors affect the extent and capacity for the provision of health services, and our funding priorities. We would urge caution in comparing services across DHBs, due to the variation in population size, and services provided in different DHBs.

**With regard to your specific queries:**

**1. Does your DHB currently have a specified lymphoedema services?**

Yes, additional publicly available information on these services is on our website: <https://countiesmanukau.health.nz/our-services/a-z/lymphoedema-service/>

**2. What services are provided for patients with lymphoedema in your DHB?**

We have a dedicated Lymphoedema Service. This provides outpatient-only services, which occur at Middlemore Hospital, Botany Clinic and Manukau Super Clinic. The clinics provide support for referrals from primary, secondary (hospital), and for the at-risk groups.

**3. How much funding is allocated for lymphoedema services within your DHB annually?**

- a. Also, please include % of total budget.
- b. Please provide information for the last 3-5 years.

The costs to deliver these services in the financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19 are provided (**table 1**). These include direct and overhead costs for the service. Of the CM Health provider arm budgets, Lymphoedema Service account for 0.044% of the total budget.

Fiscal Year	Total Costs
2014/15	\$358,319
2015/16	\$335,788
2016/17	\$390,326
2017/18	\$393,521
2018/19	\$475,107

**Table 1**

**4. How many FTEs are allocated in your DHB for lymphoedema therapists?**

There are currently 2.2 FTE allocated to the service.

**5. How many lymphoedema therapist position vacancies have you had over the past year?**

In the last 12 months, there has been one position vacant for part of the year.

**6. Does this service provide publicly funded lymphoedema services for cancer patients/survivors?**

Yes, referrals are accepted for lymphoedema management and education for anyone (of any age) residing within the Counties Manukau district health board area.

**7. What are the eligibility criteria to access lymphoedema service for cancer patients/survivors in your DHB?**

Any cancer patients who have had any node-removal and radiation treatment are all eligible for these services. All patients at risk are referred to our service (i.e. anyone that has had nodes removed), irrespective of how many are removed.

**8. Please list lymphoedema services / procedures available/ offered for cancer patients/survivors in your DHB (including education and early signs detection).**

In summary, services offered are:

- Education and awareness, including L-dex
- Circumferential measurements
- Massage, both manual and self
- Pneumatic compression massage machine
- Scar massage
- Myofascial release
- Axillary web syndrome
- Exercises
- Garments
- Bandaging
- Liposuction surgery pre and post-operative services

The **At-Risk programmes** are offered for all patients who have had either sentinel node biopsy or lymph node dissection for breast, head and neck, melanoma or other skin cancers. This involves follow-up/ review for up to 12-months following a biopsy/ dissection procedure. If a patient develops lymphoedema in that time, they are not discharged.

We provide education about the lymphatic system. The programme includes advice about self-management (exercises, movement, skin care, and weight management, how to recognise lymphoedema), why lymphoedema can occur, and if it does occur who to consult.

We also provide information about risk reduction, and deal with range-of-motion issues, scarring and cording. Cellulitis is explained, and patients taught about whom to contact if this occurs.

For management of lymphoedema, we offer compression bandaging, if required, compression garments and wraps, garments for head and neck oedema and scarring, and compression for genital oedema. We also teach patients how to do simple lymphatic drainage, exercises.

We tend to refer patients with end-of-life oedema to Hospice Services, as this can require a different clinical approach, (i.e. supportive and comfort, rather than reductive), and be part of wider support from hospice. We often refer patients to other services within the DHB, (e.g. for repeated episodes of cellulitis patients are referred to the Infectious Diseases clinic).

There are surgical options for those who have upper or lower limb lymphoedema with fatty deposition that does not respond to conventional treatment. This is Liposuction for Lymphoedema. The referral criteria for this procedure are limited, but the lymphoedema service provides all pre and post-operative compression services, education and on-going management.

- 9. Is there a funded provision for compression garments in your DHB?**  
**a. If so, please specify what provision is funded (how many sets of compression garments per year).**

Yes, two (2) sets of garments - one to wear, one to wash are supplied every 6 months.

- 10. How can cancer patients/ survivors access lymphoedema services in your DHB?**  
**a. Do they need a referral, and who can provide the referral?**

An e-referral is required from the patients General Practitioner, or other health professional via the Care Connect e-referrals portal.

- 11. What is the average waiting time for cancer patients/ survivors to access lymphoedema services within your DHB?**

We are not able to differentiate wait-times for lymphoedema services between cancer and other patients. The wait time for all lymphoedema patients is currently 4-to-8 weeks.

- 12. If you currently provide a lymphoedema service, what is the current waiting list status in your DHB?**  
**a. How many people are currently awaiting appointments?**  
**b. How many days is the waiting list currently at?**

There are currently 52 people waiting for appoints, with a current wait time of 41 days.

- 13. Is there a protocol on pre and post-surgery lymphoedema surveillance in your DHB, and if so could you please provide it?**

There is no documented protocol; however, the current service model includes regular surveillance of referred surgical cases. The majority of patients are first seen post-operatively, although, where feasible, we see those referred pre-operatively. All patients are given written information in their pre-operative packs, and we encourage links to the Auckland Cancer Society and other sector

resources. As noted above, for at-risk groups, we provide ongoing surveillance, for up the 12-months following a biopsy/ dissection procedure via follow-up/ review appointments. If a patient develops lymphoedema in that time, they are not discharged.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Apa', with a small blue circular stamp or mark to the right.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Counties Manukau Health**