

Clinical : Gender-affirming youth health services
Proactive Release: 09 January 2020

09 December 2019

9(2)(a)

Email: 9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, received by us on 05 December 2019, via transfer from the Ministry of Health under section 14 of the Act. You requested the following information:

- **How many teenagers (up to and including 18 y/o) and children have sought treatment/ advice from paediatric or youth health services, endocrinologists or primary health teams of any other service of DHBs because of issues relating to gender identity and being transgender?**
Please provide the information for each of the years from 2000 to 2019 (or whenever latest statistics are available).

As context for this response, Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 569,400 people), as well as regional and supra-regional specialist services (Burns, Plastics and Orthopaedics). Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient/ ambulatory and community-based models of care.

In the metro-Auckland region, referrals for most gender-affirming services are referred to the care of the Centre for Youth Health (CfYH - for young people up to 25 years), and to the Northern Region Transgender Health Services (NRTHS), rather than other Specialist Medical Services.

Publicly available information on the Hauroa Tāhine and Northern Region Transgender Health Services (NRTHS) service can be accessed via the Health Point website at the following link, and may be of interest:

- <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/northern-region-transgenderhealthservices/>
- <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/paediatrics/kidz-first-centre-for-youth-health/>

Please refer to these links (**above**) for information on the available services, including current information on provision of the procedures you have listed, and availability of a range of other supportive services and resources. This includes hormone therapy, nursing, medical, psychology and counselling services, primarily provided in out-patient clinics.

We regularly respond to Official Information Act requests related to Gender Affirming Services for our community. These responses are published on our website and best identified by searching Transgender.

- <https://countiesmanukau.health.nz/about-us/official-information-act-requests/publiclyreleased-oias/>

1. How many teenagers (up to and including 18 y/o) and children have sought treatment/ advice from paediatric or youth health services, endocrinologists or primary health teams of any other service of DHBs because of issues relating to gender identity and being transgender?

We are not able to provide all of the data you requested for each of the last 10 years, due to the manually intensive nature of retrospectively reviewing all referred patient files, and lack of electronic flags available on files to indicate those that should be reviewed for this level of referral and intervention detail. We do not believe that it is feasible for us to provide this manual collation of data, without adversely impacting clinical service provision.

We therefore refuse your request for data since 2009 on this topic, under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, *due to substantial collation or research, that divert clinical and analysts from operational priorities.*

The CfYH is continuing to work with our Clinical Analytics service to improve automation of the coding of outpatient data for the region, to include better capture of referral intention and additional treatment and intervention details.

We are providing available collated data from a 6-monthly report prepared by the Centre for Youth Health (CfYH), which provides some information on the individuals currently accessing the specialist service, at 30 June 2019 (Table 1). This data reflects standardised regional information, extracted from coded data. We trust this goes some way to meeting your requirements.

As CfYH sees more people for gender-affirming care from across the metro-Auckland region, this process is becoming a more substantial reporting process. The data collected is for the total number of patients referred for Gender-affirming Care. Please note, the CfYH sees individuals aged up to 25 years old.

Domicile	Counties Manukau	Auckland	Waitemata	Total
Total active cases at CfYH all ages	90	79	75	244
Total aged under 18 years (at 30 June 2019)	45	57	62	164

Table 1.

Data on all individual treatment plans for those individuals under the care of CfYH (including identifying a subset being prescribed puberty 'blockers') is not systematically coded. We further note that the prescribing of some hormonal medications is restricted in New Zealand, and requires a Medical Specialist authorisation; however, this does not require a referral to DHB Endocrine specialist, or to youth health services.

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 light blue shadow effect underneath.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health