

8th October 2021

s9(2)(a)
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Dear s9(2)(a) [Redacted]

Official Information Act Request for – Infusion Appointments

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 10th September 2021 by way of transfer from the Ministry of Health, you requested the following information:

1. “What is the Medical Day-Stay (non-oncology) infusion capacity where capacity is defined as the maximum number of infusions that can occur at any given time?
2. Average number of infusions per week?
3. Opening days & hours?
4. Which products are most commonly infused (top ten)?
5. Does the DHB run satellite infusion services outside of its main hospitals? If so, in what locations?
6. How often (percentage of total patients) is travel assistance (eg buses, shuttles, taxis, or monetary assistance) to attend infusions provided to patients? What are the monthly costs?
7. How often do patients not attend infusion appointments as scheduled?
8. Are scheduled IV infusions ever provided outside of the Medical Day Stay Unit (eg General Medical Ward)? If so, on average, how many times a month would this occur?
9. What is the average cost of an infusion on the Medical Day Stay Unit vs the General Medical Ward?
10. Does method of administration (eg IV vs sub-cutaneous) pose a barrier to treatment due to capacity constraints?
11. Is there a need for new medicines that are community or home-based as an alternative to infusions?
12. Are infusion bookings ever delayed due to capacity constraints? If so:
 - a. How many days (on average) from the date an infusion is required to the date it is booked for?
 - b. What is the longest period (in days) that an infusion has been delayed for in the past year?
 - c. Over the past 12 months, how many patients have had an infusion delayed due to capacity constraints?
 - d. How are bookings prioritised?
13. What is the forecasted increase in infusion numbers over the next two years?
14. Is the DHB planning to expand infusion capacity? If so:
 - a. By how much?
 - b. What is the timeframe for completion?
 - c. Will capacity meet demand?”

We contacted you on the 10th September 2021 to request the time period your request covers. You advised on the 14th September 2021 the time period of 12 months through to 30th June 2021.

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.

All responses are for the time period 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021.

1. What is the Medical Day-Stay (non-oncology) infusion capacity where capacity is defined as the maximum number of infusions that can occur at any given time?

2. Average number of infusions per week?

3. Opening days & hours?

The Infusion Centre has 6 chairs operating 8 hours 2 days per week for non-oncology excluding public holidays. For non-oncology infusions the day stay is open Monday and Wednesday 0800-1630 (the remaining days of the week are Oncology infusion days). The average number of infusions per week is 23.

4. Which products are most commonly infused (top ten)?

The products most commonly infused are: Infliximab, Rituxumab, Cyclophosphamide, Toxilizumab, Ferrinject, Pamidronate, Zoledronic Acid, Omalizumab, Intragam (IVIg).

5. Does the DHB run satellite infusion services outside of its main hospitals? If so, in what locations?

No.

6. How often (percentage of total patients) is travel assistance (eg buses, shuttles, taxis, or monetary assistance) to attend infusions provided to patients? What are the monthly costs?

This is not offered by the Infusion Centre.

7. How often do patients not attend infusion appointments as scheduled?

During the time period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021 there were 23 DNA appointment an average rate of 2%.

8. Are scheduled IV infusions ever provided outside of the Medical Day Stay Unit (eg General Medical Ward)? If so, on average, how many times a month would this occur?

Yes, however this is dependent on the service and the patient condition. This is not information that is centrally collected and to provide it would involve considerable time to manually search through individual patient files. We have, therefore, determined to decline this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

9. What is the average cost of an infusion on the Medical Day Stay Unit vs the General Medical Ward?

CM Health is declining to answer this part of your request under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Official Information Act 1982, as making this information publicly available would likely unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of CM Health.

10. Does method of administration (eg IV vs sub-cutaneous) pose a barrier to treatment due to capacity constraints?

No.

11. Is there a need for new medicines that are community or home-based as an alternative to infusions?

Being able to access care close to home is usually better for patients when clinically appropriate.

12. Are infusion bookings ever delayed due to capacity constraints? If so:

- a. **How many days (on average) from the date an infusion is required to the date it is booked for?**
13.5 days in this time period.
- b. **What is the longest period (in days) that an infusion has been delayed for in the past year?**
21 days – excluding patients waiting to start their first treatment.
- c. **Over the past 12 months, how many patients have had an infusion delayed due to capacity constraints?**
60 patients.
- d. **How are bookings prioritised?**
Bookings are prioritised on a clinical basis based on the information provided by the referring service.

13. What is the forecasted increase in infusion numbers over the next two years?

It is difficult to answer as the Infusion Centre is a treatment delivery service, however the largest user of the service is Gastroenterology and they have experienced 10-12% growth in the past 2 years

14. Is the DHB planning to expand infusion capacity? If so:

- a. **By how much?**
Increasing from 6 to 11 chairs and consideration is underway to developing capacity within primary care centres as well.
- b. **What is the timeframe for completion?**
2021/2022 financial year.
- c. **Will capacity meet demand?**
It is likely that there will be increased demand from other users if the capacity is increased. This is not a long term solution and further modelling is underway currently to understand demand forecasting.

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