

15 May 2019

Gloria Fraser

Email: fyi-request-10076-748ef512@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Gloria

YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT (1982) REQUEST HBDHB REF: OIA2019054

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 12 April 2019 where you requested information from Hawke's Bay District Health Board (HBDHB). Your questions and HBDHB's response is provided below:

1. *Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by the Hawke's Bay District Health Board **for transgender patients**, and whether the services are currently available:*

- Puberty blockers
- Hormone therapy
- Mastectomy
- Hysterectomy
- Orchidectomy
- Facial hair removal
- Breast augmentation
- Voice training
- Facial feminization surgery

HBDHB provides both puberty blocking therapy and cross gender steroids ("hormone therapy"). Puberty blockade (which is largely reversible) is utilised primarily by HBDHB paediatricians, with back up advice/support from HBDHB and Starship endocrinology staff.

Cross gender steroids (which are irreversible) are provided through HBDHB's adult endocrinology. There is also a general practice –based GPSI service (General Practitioner with Special Interest) run by a Hawke's Bay GP, in collaboration with hospital-based services. All the other services listed above are tertiary level and not provided by HBDHB.

2. *Are transgender healthcare providers under the Hawke's Bay District Health Board encouraged to follow Oliphant et al's (2018) Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa New Zealand? If not, which guidelines do they follow, if any?*

Yes, HBDHB bases its services on the Oliphant Guidelines.

3. *Is a readiness assessment required to access gender-affirming healthcare services? (This is an assessment of readiness for treatment from a medical and psychosocial perspective, as well as whether the client understands the risks and benefits of treatment, and is sometimes referred to as a 'mental health assessment').*

Readiness/psychological assessments are completed before embarking on any puberty blockade or hormonal treatment, always using an informed consent model. HBDHB's paediatric team also see

some children with gender dysphoria, who are followed for some years without intervention. In these cases, psychological assessments are not completed as they do not progress to treatment.

4. *If a readiness assessment is required to access gender-affirming healthcare services, who carries out this assessment? Is this assessment funded by the Hawke's Bay District Health Board? Does the assessment use an informed consent model?*

Refer response provided to question 3 above; services provided at Hawke's Bay Hospital are funded by HBDHB for patients eligible for publicly-funded healthcare.

5. *What steps is the Hawke's Bay District Health Board taking to improve healthcare provision for transgender New Zealanders?*

HBDHB has taken a number of steps to improve its transgender services over the past few years including:

- Multidisciplinary group established to map current services and provide guidance for referrers (Map of Medicine approach).
- Development of GPSI service with increasing amount support from Primary Care.
- Establishment of Transgender Multi-Discipline Team (MDT) which meets monthly to discuss active cases and agree on best management. Members include adult endocrinologist, paediatric endocrinologist, GP with Special Interest, clinical psychologists, endocrine clinic nurse, clinical nurse manager, psychiatrists, registered social worker and planning and commissioning manager.
- Supporting staff members to attend national and international meetings as part of their professional development to improve knowledge and skills.

I trust this information meets your needs. If you would like any further information or clarification please phone me. If you are not satisfied with this response you may contact the Office of the Ombudsmen, phone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Hawke's Bay DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely



Kevin Snee
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

cc: Ministry of Health via email: SectorOIAs@moh.govt.nz