

21 May 2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Response to a request for official information

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for official information received 2 March 2020 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)¹ where you seek the following information.

- 1. The total number of patients who have waited longer than six hours in the emergency department (ED) each month for the last five years (Jan 2015 - Dec 2019), with a breakdown by gender, ethnicity and age.*

NMH response

Please see Tables 1 – 4 below.

TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS

MONTH	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
JAN	141	165	169	243	292
FEB	156	170	243	187	267
MAR	145	128	149	164	367
APR	134	142	174	203	284
MAY	151	116	195	186	306
JUN	167	138	148	166	421
JUL	237	175	226	191	316
AUG	192	160	245	210	311
SEP	127	159	203	192	261
OCT	92	154	182	269	318
NOV	93	181	174	298	334
DEC	125	169	217	352	449

¹ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

TABLE 2: GENDER

GENDER	MONTH	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
FEMALE	Jan	71	93	93	119	134
	Feb	90	96	132	102	140
	Mar	90	75	89	69	174
	Apr	60	71	88	89	158
	May	86	65	108	101	143
	Jun	102	75	76	85	215
	Jul	133	108	114	88	155
	Aug	111	89	139	114	174
	Sep	63	83	108	95	142
	Oct	47	78	98	150	169
	Nov	55	82	84	153	166
	Dec	66	76	105	188	225
MALE	Jan	70	72	76	124	158
	Feb	66	73	111	85	127
	Mar	55	53	60	95	192
	Apr	74	71	86	114	126
	May	64	51	87	85	163
	Jun	65	63	72	81	206
	Jul	104	67	112	103	161
	Aug	81	71	106	96	137
	Sep	64	76	95	97	119
	Oct	45	76	84	119	149
	Nov	38	99	90	145	166
	Dec	59	93	112	164	224

TABLE 3: ETHNICITY

ETHNICITY	MONTH	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
MAORI	Jan	7	21	13	23	35
	Feb	12	15	20	23	30
	Mar	10	14	17	18	39
	Apr	8	8	16	20	32
	May	5	9	21	14	30
	Jun	12	17	14	20	46
	Jul	22	21	27	19	28
	Aug	8	17	33	21	33
	Sep	11	15	17	17	30
	Oct	8	15	20	19	29
	Nov	3	23	15	26	31
	Dec	10	24	25	36	41

ETHNICITY	MONTH	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
PACIFIC	Jan	3	4	2	1	5
	Feb	4	2	4	1	3
	Mar			3	4	8
	Apr	2	2		3	6
	May		3	1	1	3
	Jun	1	2	2	4	9
	Jul	5	5		6	5
	Aug	4	3	7	3	6
	Sep	1	1	2	2	2
	Oct	2	2	1	5	6
	Nov		6	2	3	6
	Dec		1	3	4	5
OTHER	Jan	131	140	154	219	252
	Feb	140	153	219	163	234
	Mar	135	114	129	142	320
	Apr	124	132	158	180	246
	May	146	104	173	171	273
	Jun	154	119	132	142	366
	Jul	210	149	199	166	283
	Aug	180	140	205	186	272
	Sep	115	143	184	173	229
	Oct	82	137	161	245	283
	Nov	90	152	157	269	297
	Dec	115	144	189	312	403

TABLE 4: AGE

AGE GROUP	MONTH	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
0-16	Jan	1	3	5	7	8
	Feb	8	6	6	4	6
	Mar	1		3	6	7
	Apr	3	1	4		8
	May	3	4	6	3	12
	Jun	9	5	7	6	6
	Jul	9	3	8	4	12
	Aug	4	7	11	6	5
	Sep	4	5	2	7	13
	Oct	1	7	5	6	6
	Nov	5	10	10	8	10
	Dec	2	5	6	15	19

AGE GROUP	MONTH	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
17-64	Jan	78	82	82	114	145
	Feb	64	84	122	90	111
	Mar	70	68	72	83	175
	Apr	67	69	73	98	134
	May	72	53	93	94	129
	Jun	74	57	69	67	172
	Jul	110	95	95	80	110
	Aug	90	74	88	105	132
	Sep	50	69	89	88	119
	Oct	42	62	86	125	138
	Nov	48	75	81	128	145
	Dec	60	88	113	149	206
65+	Jan	62	80	82	122	139
	Feb	84	80	115	93	150
	Mar	74	60	74	75	185
	Apr	64	72	97	105	142
	May	76	59	96	89	165
	Jun	84	76	72	93	243
	Jul	118	77	123	107	194
	Aug	98	79	146	99	174
	Sep	73	85	112	97	129
	Oct	49	85	91	138	174
	Nov	40	96	83	162	179
	Dec	63	76	98	188	224

2. *The total number of people prescribed painkillers after presenting to ED each month for the last five years (Jan 2015 -Dec 2019), with a breakdown by gender, ethnicity and age.*

NMH response

This information is not held in a centralised database and it would take a significant amount of time and resource to manually go through individual files of patients who present to the Emergency Department (ED). As such, NMH declines to respond under section 18(f) as *'the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research'*.

3. *The shortest, average and longest wait time for a patient to be referred from the emergency department to the gynaecology department each month for the last five years. (Jan 2015 – Dec 2019).*
4. *The shortest, average and longest wait time for a patient to be referred from the emergency department to the cardiology department each month for the last five years. (Jan 2015- Dec 2019).*
5. *The shortest, average and longest wait time for a patient to be referred from the emergency department to the urology department each month for the last five years (Jan 2015- Dec 2019).*

NMH response Questions 3 – 5

NMH asked for clarification, via Technical Advisory Services (TAS) on behalf of DHBs, on 5 March 2020, about what is meant by 'referral' for Questions 3 – 5; whether an assessment for admission, or to an Outpatient Department appointment. NMH sought clarification with you on 6 April 2020 and to date we have not received a reply.

Agencies are required to provide a fact-based response and are not expected to make assumptions about what is being asked. As such, NMH declines to respond under section 12(2) *'the official information requested shall be specified with due particularity in the request'*.

6. *The number of declined referrals from the emergency department each month for the last five years (Jan 2015 to Dec 2019), with a break down by gender, ethnicity and age.*
CLARIFICATION: *The number of declined referrals from the emergency department each month for the last five years with a breakdown by gender, ethnicity and age.*

NMH response

Patients referred to other specialties from ED are reviewed by those specialties so there are no 'declined referrals'.

7. *The total number of complaints received by the DHB relating a referral to a mental health service each month for the last five years (Jan 2015 - Dec 2019) with a breakdown by gender, ethnicity and age. Also with one sentence to explain what each complaint is about.*

NMH response

This question is not in a form that matches the searchable fields and reporting categories of our incident management system. It would involve a significant amount of time and resources to go through individual files. As such, NMH declines to respond for this aspect of your request under section 18(f) as *'the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research'*.

8. *The total number of complaints received by the DHB relating undiagnosed symptoms or misdiagnosed conditions each month last year (Jan 2015 – Dec 2019), with a breakdown by gender, ethnicity and age. Also with one sentence to explain what each complaint is about without naming or identifying anyone.*

NMH response

NMH Disclaimer

The definition of 'undiagnosed' or 'misdiagnosed' is problematic. There are often several 'working diagnoses' before the final diagnosis, of which are sometimes captured as a 'missed diagnosis'.

Please see Table 5 on the following page for the total number of reported complaints relating to misdiagnosis by Calendar Year 2015 – 2019. Due to such low numbers by month and by year, and risk of individual identifiability, exact numbers are withheld to maintain the privacy of natural persons. As such, NMH declines to release the information under Section 9(2)(a) *'to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons'*.

TABLE 5

2015	0
2016	<5*
2017	0
2018	<5*
2019	5

*The exact number is withheld to maintain the privacy of natural persons. In the circumstances, the withholding of that information is not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable, in the public interest, to make that information available.

The reporting system does not capture gender or age, and ethnicity is not a mandatory reporting field. It would involve a significant amount of time and resources to go through individual files. As such, NMH declines to respond for this aspect of your request under section 18(f) as *'the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research'*.

Table 6 below shows the summary entered into our reporting system of the complainant's allegation in their complaint. The outcome of the complaint and results of investigation of the complaint are not specifically recorded in our reporting system. Given any definitional issues and reliance on information entered into the on-line reporting system by each submitter, there may be incomplete information. The information recorded does not identify the variance in the extent/degree of misdiagnosis and recorded incidents may not necessarily meet the generic definition of 'misdiagnosis.'

TABLE 6

Attitude and manner of staff. Feels she has an undiagnosed condition
Cardiology, standard of treatment, misdiagnosed.
delay in treatment misdiagnosis
misdiagnosis
misdiagnosis disrespect stressed no medical help
misdiagnosis, delay in treatment
Patient claims misdiagnosis.
Patient complains of misdiagnosis and prejudice.
physically & emotionally painful misdiagnosis disrespectful manner

This response has been provided under the Official Information Act 1982. You have the right to seek an investigation by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602. If you have any questions about this decision please feel free to email our OIA Coordinator OIArequest@nmdhb.govt.nz. I trust that this information meets your requirements. NMH, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider.

Yours sincerely



Dr Peter Bramley
Chief Executive