

13 November 2020

(name and contact details redacted)

Dear (name redacted)

YOUR OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT (1982) REQUEST HBDHB REF: OIA2020130

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 30 September 2020 where you requested information from Hawke's Bay District Health Board (HBDHB). Your questions and HBDHB's response is provided below:

How many GP referrals to hospital specialists have been declined. Can I get this information broken down by specialisation and by month, starting September 2018?

Referrals received for hospital-based specialist assessment, from either a general practitioner or private specialist, are initially assessed for completeness ie, all referral documentation and work up testing is included with the referral. Incomplete referrals are returned to be re-submitted once all the referral documentation is provided.

On receipt of complete referral documentation patients are clinically assessed and either accepted for a first specialist assessment or, if they do not meet the specialty threshold for treatment the referral is declined.

Hawke's Bay DHB uses a clinical prioritisation assessment score system to work through referrals of some surgeries. Those passing this threshold are put onto the waitlist based on greatest need.

People who do not meet the threshold criteria are referred back to their GP with advice given for alternative treatment/care back within the community. At any time a GP can request their patient's condition to be reviewed for consideration onto the waitlist.

For context it should also be noted that in 2018/2019 multiple strike actions by union workforces affecting all district health boards (for example, Registered Medical Officers, New Zealand Nurses Union, Anesthetic Technicians, Midwives) had significant impacts on planned care in Hawke's Bay with for instance many electives deferred and only life and limb preserving surgery performed. It's important to note HBDHB went through many months of rolling strike action whilst district health boards worked through negotiations at a national level.

Delivery of elective activity in 2019/20 was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 response and requirements around lockdown – experienced by all district health boards.

HBDHB has increased its funding for surgery by 40 percent (2014/15 \$45 million – 2018/2019 - \$63 million). The DHB also spent \$1 million on new laparoscopic towers for theatres which were in use by mid-2019 to allow for more complex surgery. Operating theatre hours also expanded with Saturday operations beginning in February 2019.

Please refer to Appendix One for a breakdown of referrals declined, by month and by medical and surgical specialty, since September 2018.

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 Ombudsman, 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

Chris Ash
Chief Operating Officer, Provider Services
TE PUNI RATONGA

cc: *Ministry of Health via email: SectorOIA@moh.govt.nz oia@hbdhb.govt.nz*

Month/ Year Specialty	09/18	10/18	11/18	12/18	01/19	02/19	03/19	04/19	05/19	06/19	07/19	08/19	09/19	10/19	11/19	12/19	01/20	02/20	03/20	04/20	05/20	06/20	07/20	08/20	09/20
Cardiology	17	8	3	8	14		9	18	10	19	25	12	6		9	34	8	5	7	1		1		2	
Dental	23	6	19	11	8	12	16	14	8	5	11	5	11	6	2	7	6	8	2	1		3	21	13	10
Dermatology					1			16	132	50	59	28	36	36	10	6	8	7	4	1	2	1	2	13	12
Ear Nose and Throat	46	52	68	38	22	36	47	56	48	53	65	63	46	51	68	61	45	61	73	13	29	60	43	46	58
Endocrinology																	1								1
Gastro Enterology	1																								
General Medicine			1							2	3		1			1	1	1	6		2		1		1
General Surgery	26	22	30	25	12	29	24	26	26	1	4	3	7	1	1	6	15	5	7	1	3	3	12	6	9
Gynaecology	2	13	16	17	8	13	45	19	15	23	32	32	32	31	13	6	30	15	17	5	5	10	26	15	16
Maxillo - Facial									3			1	6		1		3	3	3	1		1	2	3	2
Neurology	1	3		2	1	7	5	5	5	2	2	5	1	5	3	4	5				5	11	12	8	4
Ophthalmology	8	18	13	13	2	9	10	10	10	5	5	12	6	10	9	12	13	10	8	4	13	11	8	14	9
Orthopaedics	50	17	37	45	25	47	25	15	18	30	20	64	38	30	23	24	32	32	50	10	13	32	48	35	25
Paediatric															2								2	11	1
Renal Medicine	2		1											1					1						1
Respiratory	2	5	4	2	1	3		2	3		2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3					4	7
Rheumatology	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	5	7	4	4	5	1	6	3	4	3	3	1		4	13	3	4	4
Urology	2	4	5	1	5	1	1	3			4	10	2			1	6	9	6	1			1	4	2
Vascular								1											1	1		2	1	1	

NOTE: Dental referrals are also received from community dentists and oral health services, public health nurses.