

Thursday, 27 May 2021

Re: Official Information Act Request - Air ambulance services

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982.

Our response is as follows

1. *How many currently registered flight nurses are employed by the DHB?*

Hauora Tairāwhiti employs 19 registered flight nurses on various FTE.

2. *What is the average remuneration of currently registered flight nurses employed by the DHB by qualification and seniority bands?*

- Clinical Nurse Specialist Flight Co-ordination: Senior nurse scale - Grade 4 (NZNO / DHB MECA 2018-2020) \$101,541 p.a
- Flight nurses: Grades 5-8 (depending on seniority) \$72,945 - \$82,957 as per contracted FTE. Penal rates as per MECA are additional to this.

3. *For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?*

This data is not held by Hauora Tairāwhiti. Flights are contracted based on a minimum number of missions to our usual destinations.

4. *For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?*

See answer to Question 3 above.

5. *For the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by fixed aircraft?*

2017-18	2018-2019	2019-2020
Nil	\$58,000	\$315,000

6. *For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?*

2017-18	2018-2019	2019-2020
\$2,301,000	\$2,381,000	\$2,801,000

Please note, the figures reported above do not include internal staffing cost, particularly related to the DHB internal air ambulance flight nurse team that is used when transferring patients with the [REDACTED] other parties transfer patients, costs for accompanying medical staff are

Flights that are charged to ACC directly are not included.  
 Credits from rebates for Starship flights are offset against the total cost.

7. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each [REDACTED] in for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?

Due to the systems Hauora Tairāwhiti uses for reporting around interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft, an accurate record of the total number of transfers cannot be provided without substantial collation or research. Manual differentiation would need to be undertaken when separating interhospital transfers from outpatient transfers and backloads, also considering that a single mission that may include up to three destinations.

Hauora Tairāwhiti therefore refuses this part of the request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act where “. . . the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research . . .”

8. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?

Destination	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Hamilton	3	4	17

9. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for fixed wing aircraft?

Hauora Tairāwhiti does not have a specific metric to measure service performance of service providers providing transfer services to the DHB for fixed wing aircraft.

10. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for rotary wing aircraft?

Service performance is measured by the National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO) who have specific KPIs which contract holders report on, and targets they are required to meet. There are also several industry standards such as Air Ambulance / Air Search and Rescue Service Standard and NZS 8156, which both cover interhospital transfer work. NASO service specs are posted on the Ministry of Health website:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/national-ambulance-sector-office-naso/emergency-ambulance-services-eas/eas-providers/emergency-ambulance-service-generic-service-agreements>

11. *What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?*

[REDACTED] on formal business rules, however generally the DHB of domicile agrees as to which team is used to transfer the patient unless it is urgent, as the DHB of domicile is responsible for the cost. If there are patients from different DHBs on any leg of the mission, the costs are split between the DHBs.

12. *What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital [REDACTED] for rotary wing aircraft?*

District Health boards are responsible for funding interhospital transfers (IHTs), however, there are two business rules for when IHTs are funded by either the Ministry or ACC:

- The Ministry will pay for an urgent IHT where a patient is transferred from one medical facility to another within three hours of arriving at the first facility. The exception to this rule is the northern region.
- ACC will pay for an urgent IHT when a patient is transferred from one publicly funded hospital to another within 24 hours of arriving at the first hospital, as long as that first hospital could not be reasonably expected to meet patient needs (eg. if a service is usually available at that facility, but at that particular time due to staff absence was not).

13. *What advice has the DHB provided to the Simpson Review team relating to patient transfers by aircraft?*

Nil.

14. *What growth forecasts has the DHB completed or commissioned relating to interhospital transfer demand?*

Nil.

15. *Who is the DHB currently under contract with to provide interhospital transfer by aircraft, when does the contract expire and what right of renewals exist within the contract?*

Hauora Tairāwhiti is currently under contract with Air Gisborne to provide interhospital transfers which expires in July 2024.

If you are not satisfied with this response you may contact the Office of the Ombudsmen, phone 0800 802 602.

Please note this response or an edited version of this response may be published on the Hauora Tairāwhiti DHB website. Your personal/identifying information will be redacted from any responses published. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Ngā mihi

**Jim Green**  
Chief Executive  
Hauora Tairāwhiti