



12 May 2021

[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

Official Information Act Request

I write further to my letter of 29 April 2021 regarding your request for information about patient interhospital transfer services.

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

Northland DHB does not employ dedicated flight nurses. Seventeen of our nurses have received training to enable them to accompany patients on interhospital transfer flights as and when required.

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

As noted above Northland DHB does not employ dedicated flight nurses.

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?*

	2018	2019	2020
Total	62.6	77.0	58.5

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?*

	2018	2019	2020
Total	374.9	718.8	699.5

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

	2018	2019	2020
Total	\$236,871.99	\$345,697.06	\$238,906.09

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?

	2018	2019	2020
NASO		\$1,356,250.35	\$2,422,503.24
NEST	\$1,481,519.33	\$1,392,213.09	
ARHT		\$ 55,371.90	

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

	2018	2019	2020
Total	43	51	39

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?

	2018	2019	2020
Total	314	586	538

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?

Northland DHB does not hold this information as the contract for fixed wing interhospital is between the provider and Auckland DHB. Northland DHB is not formally involved in service performance reviews.

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?

National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO) service specifications are publicly available 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?

Northland DHB has agreed with Auckland DHB to pay for the costs incurred by patients domiciled in Northland based on the current agreed schedule of charges.

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

The process is invoice based, where NASO has determined the hourly rate and invoices DHBs for interhospital transfers (IHTs) hours flown. This was first established through a variation to the Crown Funding Agreement.

District health boards are responsible for funding 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).

For each calendar month, DHBs are sent a list of IHT missions where the patients have been domiciled to that DHB. These missions exclude all missions where the provider indicates the mission is an ACC 24 hour rule IHT.

The DHB reviews the missions sent and advises if they accept the cost of the IHT or whether the cost of the IHT should be elsewhere i.e. Ministry of Health for 3 hour rule missions or another DHB.

Missions that are advised that fall under the 3 hour rule are checked with St John and those that are found to fall outside the rule are resent to DHBs. Additionally, missions that should be sent to another DHB are also sent.

DHBs are invoiced for all accepted missions for each quarter.

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

No submissions were made.

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

Northland DHB has recently commissioned a new Cardiac Catheter Lab at Whangarei Hospital. It is anticipated that as a consequence of introduction of this new service Northland DHB's demand for interhospital transfer will reduce.

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?

Northland DHB transferred part of this request as it related to rotary winged craft to the Ministry of Health as advised in my letter of 29 April 2021.

As noted in Question 9 above the contract for fixed wing interhospital transfers is between the provider and Auckland DHB. I understand that your Official Information Act request has also been sent to Auckland DHB and I expect they will respond to this part of your request.

Northland DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist public understanding of how we deliver our services. This includes proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been provided to you. Personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be publicly available we will consider your views.

If you have any queries about Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Chamberlain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Nick Chamberlain
Chief Executive