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9(2)(a)

RE Official information request CDHB 10480

I refer to your email received 12 November 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB regarding After-Hours and Urgent Care services. Specifically:

- 1. Does your DHB have a current plan or strategy for the provision of After-Hours / Urgent Care Services as defined in the PHO Services Agreement?**
 - a. If yes, please provide a copy of the plan / strategy documentation.**

The Canterbury DHB supports After-Hours / Urgent Care services in various ways, although there is not a specific strategy document.

Our Urgent Care strategy is governed by our Urgent Care Service Level Alliance (UCSLA) group. The strategy is implemented via general practices being able to claim for: Acute Demand Services, rural subsidies for rural general practices, or various contracts for service with the three urgent care centres in Christchurch. Acute Demand Management Services (wherein the practice is paid to look after the patient rather than sending them to the hospital) is for both in-hours and after-hours.

For rural communities, rural general practices are paid rural subsidies in accordance with our Alliance plan documented in Schedule F2.2A of our Primary Health Organisation Services Agreement (PHOSA).

For Christchurch City and those practices where >95% of the enrolled population can access after-hours services within 60 minutes travel time, three extended hours are available at urgent care centres. Of these three centres, two (Riccarton Clinic and Moorhouse Medical) are accessible 8am-8pm 7 days per week. These two centres are contracted to Christchurch PHO, have enrolled patients, and also serve casual patients. They are funded by the PHO Services Agreement (PHOSA) and have some direct contracts with the Canterbury DHB (e.g. Free After-Hours for Under 14s). The third Christchurch urgent care centre, Pegasus 24-Hour Surgery, is the only one which supplies 24/7 access. This service does *not* have enrolled patients, and as such is *not* funded by a PHOSA. The service is supplied by a roster of Christchurch General Practitioners (GPs) who provide their time in agreement with their Primary Health Organisation (PHO), in exchange for not providing the service in their own general practice. For most GPs, Pegasus Health is their PHO (and is also the provider of the urgent care centre service).

From November 2017 the Canterbury DHB agreed to cover the urgent care provision for the Ashburton township and surrounds from the Acute Assessment Unit at Ashburton Hospital from 8pm to 8am, 7 days per week. This was in response to the five Ashburton practices who had covered the urgent care provision as defined by the PHO

Services Agreement until that point. This change was required as the practices had been unable to sustain a workforce that could safely staff the after-hours roster due to difficulty recruiting new general practitioners to the area and an aging workforce.

Note: Please also refer to the responses for Questions 3 and 4.

The Canterbury DHB directly contracts the 24-Hour Surgery for some services that sit outside First Level Services, which includes Acute Demand Management Services (to see patients who would otherwise go to the Emergency Department) as well as First Level Services such as Free After-Hours for Under 14s.

The documentation for these supports are:

- **Rural practices:** Rural Funding Schedule F2.2A is contained in each of the PHOSAs, which are commercially sensitive. The amount distributed for rural after-hours is set by the Ministry of Health and distributed by the Canterbury DHB according to the agreements of our UCCLA.
- **Free After-Hours for Under 14 contracts** (for all practices who supply after-hours consults to their enrolled populations, and for the extended hours urgent care centres): contracts are with the PHOs and are commercially sensitive.
- **Pegasus 24-Hours Surgery:** the details are contained in our contract with Pegasus and are commercially sensitive.

We are therefore declining to provide the documentation for this part of the request subsequent to section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Official Information Act, i.e. *“would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position...”*

- **Acute Demand Management Services:** please refer to HealthPathways: <https://canterbury.communityhealthpathways.org/15354.htm>

2. As a DHB, do you directly provide or fund (either fully or partly) the provision of After-Hours / Urgent Care Services that meet the requirements of the provision of Urgent Care Services, as defined in the PHO Services Agreement?

a. If yes, please provide details of the nature and size of services funded or directly provided by the DHB (excluding financials).

The Canterbury DHB funds after-hours services in the following contracts:

- Free After-Hours Services for Under 14s – contracts with three Christchurch urgent care centres.
- Free After-Hours Services for Under 14s – contracts with all rural general practice providers of after-hours care.
- Acute Demand Management Services – both in-hours and after-hours, where a practice provides care to a patient that is not generally considered a First Level Service (e.g. Intravenous therapy (antibiotics or fluids), Nebulisers, Incision and drainage of abscesses), they can make a claim via our Acute Demand Management Services. After-hours general practice consultations can also be claimed for through Acute Demand Management Services.

3. Within your DHB district, do PHOs (or equivalent bodies) directly provide or fund (either fully or partly) the provision of After-Hours / Urgent Care Services that meet the requirements of the provision of Urgent Care Services, as defined in the PHO Services Agreement?

a. If yes, please provide details of the nature and size of services funded or directly provided by the PHO(s) (excluding financials).

The PHOs are the payment agencies of the Free After-Hours for Under 14s contracts, but Canterbury DHB is the organisation funding the contracts. Similarly, Pegasus Health is the payment agency of Acute Demand Management Services and pays the general practice claims (regardless of which PHO the general practice is contracted to) but Canterbury DHB funds this Service.

Pegasus Health is both a PHO, a service provider and an Independent Practitioners Association (IPA). The service provision function (including running the 24-Hour Surgery and being the payment agency for Acute Demand Management Services) is separate to their function as a PHO.

- 4. Are General Practices within your DHB district required to fund (either fully or partly) the provision of After-Hours / Urgent Care Services that meet the requirements of the provision of Urgent Care Services, as defined in the PHO Services Agreement?**
a. If yes, please provide details of the nature and size of services funded by General Practice.

Some rural practices voluntarily share after-hours service provision with other rural practices in their region. This can be *either* a payment in kind (a roster of GPs from all practices in the scheme share the duty) or by payment from one practice to another (e.g. a small rural practice may pay a portion of their rural subsidies to a neighbouring general practice to provide after-hours care to their patients without charging the patients the casual rate). This is a pragmatic, voluntary scheme, not a requirement.

In Christchurch, GPs contracted to Pegasus Health (PHO) are required to contribute to a GP roster for the 24-Hour Surgery in exchange for them to not deliver after-hours services in their own general practice. This requirement is between the PHO and their contracted providers.

The Canterbury DHB is not aware if the agreement between Pegasus and their practices allows a financial payment in lieu of supplying a GP for the roster.

- 5. Are General Practices within your DHB district required to participate in an urgent care / after-hours / on-call roster in order to meet their Urgent Care Services obligations, as defined in the PHO Services Agreement?**
a. If yes, is this participation (and cost of on-call availability of clinicians) at the cost of the General Practice or another entity?

Please refer to the response for Question 4.

I trust this satisfies your interest in this matter.

You may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek a review of our decision to withhold information by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz; or Freephone 0800 802 602.

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

Yours sincerely



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Planning, Funding & Decision Support