

## CORPORATE OFFICE

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13 May 2020

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### RE Official information request CDHB 10298 and WCDHB 9416

We refer to your email received 14 April 2020 requesting information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB regarding the Abortion Legislation Act (ALA 2020) and specifically with regard to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester terminations.

**Please note** termination services for West Coast DHB domiciled clients are provided by Canterbury DHB, we are therefore responding on behalf of both DHBs.

1. **Access to abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of your DHB, whether via public or private services (including but not limited to DHBs, clinics, GPs or otherwise), namely regarding:**
  - a. **Whether second and third trimester abortions were available in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, second and third trimester terminations were available at Christchurch Hospital in the 12 months prior to the enactment of the ALA 2020.

- b. **Whether there was access to abortion services sufficient to meet the demand in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, there was access to termination services sufficient to meet the demand in the 12 months prior to the enactment of the ALA 2020.

- c. **Notification (undertaken or scheduled) to the public by the DHB about access to abortion services subsequent to the enactment of the ALA 2020.**

The Canterbury DHB did not send out a specific notice to the public subsequent to the enactment of the ALA 2020, however the information is well publicised on the Ministry of Health website and <https://www.abortion.org.nz>. We did liaise with our GP Teams via the Canterbury Initiative Group.

- d. Whether the access to abortion services is projected to be sufficient to meet the demand for abortion services in the 12 months subsequent to the enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, access to termination services is projected to be sufficient to meet the demand for abortion services in the 12 months subsequent to the enactment of the ALA 2020.

*It is accepted that the DHB may not have access to information held by private services; and hence this aspect of the request is limited to information held by your DHB (or able to be accessed by your DHB) about public and private services in relation to this category.*

- 2. The identity of which entities are providing abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of the DHB, whether via public or private services (including but not limited to DHBs, clinics, GPs or otherwise).**

Services are provided at Christchurch Hospital.

*It is accepted that the DHB may not necessarily have information regarding the identity of all private entities providing abortion services; and hence this aspect of the request is limited to information held by your DHB (or able to be accessed by your DHB) about the identity of public and private providers of abortion services.*

- 3. Provision of abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of your DHB, namely:**
- a. The number of second trimester abortions carried out in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020 and whether such were medical or surgical abortions.**

There were 74 second trimester terminations carried out in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020. (70 Medical and four surgical)

- b. The number of third trimesters abortions carried out in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020 and whether such were medical or surgical abortions.**

There were four third trimester 'medical terminations' carried out in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020.

- c. The gestation (in weeks) of the pregnancy.**

Information is collected by trimester only and this specific data is not captured. We therefore decline a response to this specific question pursuant to section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information is not held and would need to be created.

- d. The legal grounds for the carrying out of the abortion.**

Maternal mental health and fetal abnormalities.

- e. The number of operating certifying consultants available to provide the service.**

Canterbury DHB has 12 operating certifying consultants available to provide the service.

- f. The age of operating certifying consultants available to provide the service. This request may be answered by reference to the age range that a consultant falls within (eg 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s years of age).**

The average age is approximately 45

- g. Where any second or third trimester abortion was not carried out, whether the DHB declined to provide such services and whether that was as a result of the unavailability of personnel.**

No declines were related to unavailability of people to perform the terminations.

- h. And if so, where were the women transferred to or referred to, whether in New Zealand or Australia or elsewhere.**

Not applicable.

- i. **Whether the abortions carried out in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020 were undertaken in conjunction with a multi-disciplinary medical team.**

Yes, terminations carried out in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020 were undertaken in conjunction with a multi-disciplinary medical team.

- j. **Any projected number of second trimester abortions and third trimester abortions to be carried out in the 12 months and 24 months subsequent to the enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Forward projections have not been undertaken. We therefore decline a response to this specific question pursuant to section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information is not held and would need to be created.

*It is accepted that the DHB may not have access to information held by private services; and hence this aspect of the request is limited to information held by your DHB (or able to be accessed by your DHB) about public and private services in relation to this category.*

4. **The identity of which entities provide the resourcing of abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of your DHB, whether via public or private services, including but not limited to, DHBs, clinics, GPs or otherwise).**

DHB only

*It is accepted that the DHB may not necessarily have information regarding the identity of all private entities resourcing abortion services; and hence this aspect of the request is limited to information held by your DHB (or able to be accessed by your DHB) about the identity of entities resourcing abortion services.*

This category of request is limited to information about the identity of the providers of human resources as outlined in the next category.

5. **Human resourcing of abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of your DHB, namely regarding certifying consultants, operating doctors, theatre staff, nurses, support staff, namely:**  
a. **Whether the DHB had sufficient staff (whether employees, contractors or otherwise) to meet the demand in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, the Canterbury DHB had sufficient staff to meet the demand in the 12 months prior to enactment of ALA 2020.

- b. **Whether in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020 the DHB seconded staff or personnel to or from other providers of abortion services to meet that demand.**

No, the Canterbury DHB did not second staff or personnel to or from other providers of termination services to meet that demand.

- c. **Whether the DHB will have sufficient staff (whether employees, contractors or otherwise) to meet any projected demand in the 12 months and 24 months subsequent to enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, the Canterbury DHB will have sufficient staff to meet any projected demand in the 12 months and 24 months subsequent to enactment of the ALA 2020.

6. **The identity of which entities (whether Ministries or Departments or otherwise) are funding abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of your DHB, whether via public or private services (including but not limited to DHBs, clinics, GPs or otherwise).**

Canterbury DHB is not aware of other entities Ministries or Departments other than the DHB funding termination services.

*It is accepted that the DHB may not necessarily have information regarding the identity of all private entities funding abortion services; and hence this aspect of the request is limited to information held by your DHB (or able to be accessed by your DHB) about the identity of entities funding abortion services.*

- 7. Funding abortion services (surgical or medical) within the catchment area of your DHB, namely:**
- a. Whether second and third trimester abortions were funded by the DHB in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, second and third trimester terminations were funded by the Canterbury DHB in the 12 months prior to enactment of the ALA 2020.

- b. Whether second and third trimester abortions will be funded by the DHB in the 12 months subsequent to enactment of the ALA 2020.**

Yes, second and third trimester terminations will be funded by the Canterbury DHB in the 12 months subsequent to enactment of the ALA 2020.

- 8. Since 1 December 2017 any Ministry of Health advice (or by any other Ministries or Departments or otherwise) to your DHB regarding access to, or provision of or funding of surgical or medical abortion services.**

- Details provided around the new abortion reform and the consultation process.
- Email from abortion law reform committee about Pharmac new funding proposal for mifepristone and misoprostal

- 9. Since 1 December 2017 any advice by the DHB to the Minister of Health regarding access to, or provision of or funding of surgical or medical abortion services throughout New Zealand and the particular area for which your DHB is responsible.**

No

- 10. The DHB's policies, stance or advice regarding conscience objections regarding abortion services, whether by any medical health practitioner, employee, contractor or otherwise.**

Canterbury District Health Board is respectful of both our staff and the women's personal beliefs whilst at the same time ensuring the service is able to be provided for women.

- 11. Since 1 December 2017 any DHB review of its policies, stance or advice regarding conscience objections regarding abortion services, whether by any medical health practitioner, employee, contractor or otherwise.**

No, there has been no DHB review of policies, stance or advice regarding conscience objections regarding abortion/termination services, whether by any medical health practitioner, employee, contractor or otherwise.

- 12. Since 1 December 2017 any DHB review of or consideration of steps taken or steps to be taken to manage, respond to or implement the enactment of the ALA 2020, namely regarding:**

- a. The new conscience objection provisions.**
- b. The new wider lawful access to abortion services.**
- c. Providing abortion services in response to the new wider lawful access.**
- d. Human resourcing abortion services in response to the new wider lawful access.**
- e. Funding abortion services in response to the new wider lawful access.**

Canterbury District Health Board has ensured that staff are aware of the new notification procedures and have ensured staff have easy access to the new forms and the codes required to complete the forms.

I trust that 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](http://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

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

Carolyn Gullery  
**Executive Director**  
**Planning, Funding & Decision Support**