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27 October 2020

9(2)(a)

RE Official information request CDHB 10435

I refer to your email dated 30 September 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from the Canterbury DHB. Specifically:

1. What has the DHB spent on locums for medical specialists every year for the past five years in the following departments? General surgery, Orthopaedics, Enterology, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Urology and Cardiology
2. Could I please have the total locum spend year by year over this period, as well as the total internal staff spent on specialists for the same periods?

We are unable to differentiate the spend on locums for medical specialists. However, **Table One** below shows the total cost per department of insourced and outsourced medical specialists in our current accounting system that covers the last two financial years.

Table One

	2018/19		2019/20	
	Medical Outsourced	Medical Employees	Medical Outsourced	Medical Employees
General Surgery	\$851,823	\$6,396,692	\$1,013,051	\$6,977,601
Orthopaedics	\$170,172	\$6,176,616	\$200,613	\$7,788,979
Gastroenterology	\$178,712	\$2,623,973	\$181,565	\$3,203,349
Gynaecology	\$328,332	\$6,814,719	\$357,737	\$7,439,216
Ophthalmology	\$18,190	\$2,643,568	\$29,673	\$3,073,196
Urology	-	\$1,524,758	-	\$1,523,545
Cardiology	\$624,942	\$3,660,990	\$883,332	\$3,755,362
TOTAL	\$2,172,171	\$29,841,315	\$2,665,971	\$33,761,248

Please note: We changed accounting systems from Oracle R11 to Oracle R12 two years ago. The different coding and formats used in the previous accounting system make direct comparisons at this level of data problematic, so only data from the current system (containing past two financial years) has been shown.

3. What is the size of the population the DHB serves and what is its annual operating budget?

Please refer to the Documents Library on the Canterbury DHB website for the Annual Plan, which contains information on the population size that the DHB serves and contains its annual operating budget.

Canterbury DHB's 2020/2021 Annual Plan will be made available on this website following Ministerial review: <https://www.cdhb.health.nz/about-us/document-library/>

Therefore, we are withholding this information in accordance with the Official Information Act 9(2)(j) and 18(d) of the Official Information Act, namely to *"enable a Minister of the Crown... to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations"* and *"that the information requested... will soon be publicly available."*

4. It would also be helpful to have explanations for higher (or lower) than usual locum costs for particular periods and whether or not the DHB offers limited services in respective departments.

The increase in costs from year 2018/19 to 2019/20 shown in **Table One** above relates predominantly to MECA increases (rate and step increases), as well as patient volume increases.

When faced with the possibility of limited services in respective departments due to planned and unplanned absences or vacancies, the Canterbury DHB makes all efforts to avoid compromising patient care through the redistribution of resources, which can be (amongst others) provision of additional out of hours cover and use of the Private Sector and other DHBs. However, the DHB does offer limited services from time to time due to all other options being exhausted.

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



Ralph La Salle
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Planning, Funding & Decision Support