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28 October 2020

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RE Official information request CDHB 10429

I refer to your email dated 22 September 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB regarding NICU and the Maternity Unit and your interview with Nicola Austin (22/09/2020). Specifically:

We discussed the unit having to put in additional cots above the 41 it is resourced for. She explained this means needing more staff and going above budget but could not provide figures around this. She also said that when physical capacity and/or staffing capacity has reached its limits, at-risk women have to be sent away to give birth in other centres, which also incurs costs for the CDHB.

Could you please find out?

1. What are the additional costs associated with increasing cot capacity above budget - could you tell me by how much the unit went over budget over the last five years, broken down by year?

NICU

Table one:

Financial Year	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	YTD variance
2019/20	18,912,911	17,232,336	(1,680,575)
2018/19	18,017,065	15,636,508	(2,380,557)
2017/18	15,205,215	13,873,176	(1,332,040)
2016/17	13,695,147	12,744,441	(950,706)
2015/16	12,789,348	12,897,554	108,206

Note: The majority of the over expenditure in the past four financial years is attributed to a rise in 'employee expenses' to manage the increased cot occupancy.

2. What is the average cost of sending a woman away to give birth, including flights, stay in NICU in another city and other related expenses? How much has the CDHB spent on sending women away to give birth over the last five years. broken down by year?

We are not able to provide the level of detail requested as it is not held in an easily retrievable data system. What we have been able to identify for you is the cost to the Canterbury DHB for women, domiciled in the Canterbury DHB area who were admitted and gave birth at another DHB (mostly going to Auckland, Southern and Nelson Marlborough and to a lesser extent, Wellington and South Canterbury). **Table two** (below).

Note: this is all Maternity (Mothers and Babies) Inpatient Services including Paediatric neo natal at the other DHBs. For Auckland births this is likely to be for clinical reasons for Paediatric Cardiac services.

Table two:

Financial Year	Discharges	Cost to CDHB
2015/16	107	\$1,035,968.48
2016/17	108	\$825,917.61
2017/18	93	\$792,307.04
2018/19	111	\$1,062,310.04
2019/20	77	\$567,207.22

3. Comparing the cost of sending a woman away to give birth and the cost of increasing capacity, which one is cheapest? And if sending women away is more expensive then why is the CDHB not resourcing more beds to reduce the expense of sending women away?

The cost analysis of inutero transfers vs increasing capacity, is not a piece of work that has been undertaken; we are therefore unable to provide a response to this question pursuant to section 18(g) of the Official Information Act i.e. we do not hold this information.

4. Nicola mentioned she was hoping for an increase in the number of staff she could hire this year, which would therefore increase the number of funded cots - what would be the number of funded cots if this year's budget was approved?

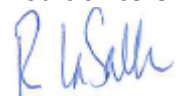
Until the budget is approved we are unable to comment on or analyse the impact on the number of resourced cots. We are hopeful due to ongoing increased capacity that there will be an increase in the budget to address the number of nurses required.

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

Acting Executive Director

Planning, Funding & Decision Support