

14 May 2019

Gloria Fraser
Mail to: fyi-request-10074-b897c423@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Gloria Fraser

Official Information Act Request – Our Reference 2019/070

Thank you for your email received by Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB) on 12 April 2019 in which, under the Official Information Act 1982, you requested information related to gender-affirming healthcare services.

The first part of the request asks whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by CCDHB for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available. Please see our answers below each.

Puberty Blockers

Puberty Blockers are prescribed by the Paediatric Endocrinologists, and a readiness assessment is completed by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Hormone Therapy

Gender-affirming hormonal therapy in clients >18 years of age is commenced by the endocrine service at CCDHB following referral from a general practitioner (GP); or is now commenced at several selected primary care sites throughout the region, including youth one stop shop practices and tertiary education student health practices. Patients under 16 years of age are seen by the CCDHB paediatric endocrinology service, while clients between the ages of 16-18 may be seen by any of the above services. Those clients who commence hormones within a DHB service are discharged back to their primary care provider at an early stage.

Mastectomy

CCDHB service does not perform this procedure as part of gender-affirming healthcare.

Hysterectomy

The Women's Health Service offers hysterectomy to patients as part gender-affirming healthcare. Referral is through a general practitioner and all patients need to undergo a readiness assessment prior to being seen at the gynaecology clinic. The readiness assessment is not currently funded. Once surgery is undertaken, patients are then discharged from the service.

Orchidectomy

There is access to this procedure through the Urology service. Referral is through a GP following a readiness assessment. The readiness assessment is not currently funded. Once this surgery is undertaken, patients are then discharged from the service.

Facial Hair Removal

CCDHB does not offer this procedure as part of gender affirming healthcare.

Breast Augmentation

CCDHB does not offer this procedure as part of gender affirming healthcare.

Voice Training

The Speech Language Therapy service offers this as part of gender affirming healthcare with access being through specialist referral.

Facial Feminization Surgery

CCDHB does not offer this procedure as part of gender affirming healthcare.

In addition, the request also asks the following questions. Please see our answers below each.

Are transgender healthcare providers under the Capital and Coast District Health Board encouraged to follow Oliphant et al's (2018) Guidelines for gender affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa New Zealand? If not, which guidelines do they follow, if any?

Prescribers of GAHT in the endocrinology service at CCDHB and selected primary care practices follow several international guidelines that are considered to reflect best practice. Presently there is very little high quality evidence to indicate precisely how GAHT should be prescribed and managed over a life time. Two of the eight authors of the Oliphant et al (2018) guidelines are CCDHB health professionals and this document was written to reflect current practices around the country. Healthcare practitioners in CCDHB and regional primary care services are therefore encouraged to use these guidelines to guide their practice.

Is a readiness assessment required to access gender-affirming healthcare services? (This is an assessment of readiness for treatment from a medical and psychosocial perspective, as well as whether the client understands the risks and benefits of treatment, and is sometimes referred to as a 'mental health assessment')

For patients over 18 years of age:

A readiness for hormonal therapy assessment is required prior to a meeting with an endocrinologist or prescribing general practitioner. The assessment comprises a number of specified aspects and is typically conducted by a mental health professional, although potentially this assessment could be conducted by any health professional with adequate skills and experience. In Wellington this assessment is provided for young adults and adults (16+) by a clinical psychologist working within the endocrinology department. A clinical psychologist employed by Wairarapa District Health Board (WaiDHB) is due to complete these for adults (18+) in the Wairarapa region, or by one of a number of clinical psychologists working in the private sector.

For patients under 18 years of age:

A paediatric endocrinologist will assess children entering puberty for discussion on puberty blocking hormones and manage them thereafter. The agreed protocol is that the paediatric endocrinologist will assess the child once a clinical psychologist (CCDHB & Hutt Valley DHB) or a Psychiatrist (WaiDHB) from the CAMHS has performed a screening assessment of mental health and supports. Thus, any referral is discussed between and accepted by both services, and then there is a CAMHS assessment followed by a paediatric endocrinology assessment and further treatment.

If a readiness assessment is required to access gender-affirming healthcare services, who carries out this assessment? Is this assessment funded by the Capital and Coast District Health Board? Does the assessment use an informed consent model?

As per above. The readiness assessment is provided by the 3DHBs to access medical interventions (i.e. puberty blockers or hormone therapy, but is not yet provided to access surgical interventions. The readiness assessment is based on recommendations as provided in Oliphant et al's (2018) Guidelines for gender-affirming healthcare for gender diverse and transgender children, young people and adults in Aotearoa New Zealand, and adhering to the WPATH Soc7 guidelines, and includes an informed consent model (as per these guidelines).

What steps is the Capital and Coast District Health Board taking to improve healthcare provision for transgender New Zealanders?

- Pathway development for primary and secondary clinicians was published on 3D Health Pathways website December 2018
- Shorter waiting times through increased clinical time to access a readiness assessment for hormone therapy, and this service now offered for 16-17 year olds via the endocrine department
- Progressing increased capacity to support the paediatric population
- Process development within CCDHB to improve appropriate access to the High Cost Treatment Pool (HCTP) list for gender reassignment surgery. Work underway to better understand the options and process to access gender-affirming surgeries provided directly by CCDHB.
- CCDHB professionals and our community partners sit together on the Wellington Sex and Gender Diversity Working Group to discuss any current issues and work toward better outcomes for our gender diverse population.

I hope this information addresses your query. You have a right to seek a review, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, by way of a complaint to the Ombudsman, about the information that has been provided to you.

Yours sincerely



Carey Virtue
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Medicine, Cancer and Community Directorate