

1 August 2024

Andy R

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Tēnā koe Andy R

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00049749

Thank you for your email on 25 May 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

In June 2023, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall announced a review/evaluation of the Equity Adjustor Tool.

Under the OIA, please provide me with:

- a copy of any final report that was produced at the conclusion of the review/evaluation*
- a summary of the main findings review/evaluation*
- a summary of the changes, if any, that have resulted from the review/evaluation*
- or, an update on the review/evaluation and any interim findings if the review/evaluation has not been completed*

Please also answer the following questions:

- Is the Equity Adjustor Tool still in use?*
- if it is still in use, please explain in what settings and how it is being used*
- On 19 September 2023, in response to an OIA request, your organisation said: "Patients are first prioritised according to their clinical need and placed into a clinical category. The equity tool is then used to help determine the order in which patients are booked for surgery within each clinical category. Factors taken into consideration include the length of time someone has been waiting, Māori or Pacific ethnicity, patients from low socio-economic areas and those living in rural areas." Is this still an accurate characterisation of how the tool is being used?*

Response

Prioritisation is an important part of delivering many health services, to match services across the relevant population in the best possible way and determining access to planned care is an important example of prioritisation.

Achieving health equity across all groups of people, and Māori in particular, is a key aim of Health NZ's legislation, and something we are required to pursue in everything we do. Māori, Pacific, disabled and rural communities face some of the highest needs in the health system.

Te Toka Tumai Auckland and the Southern districts of Health NZ created separate tools to help reduce inequity of access to planned care. The tools were intended to help level the playing field for particular groups who experience well-evidenced inequities in both access to and outcomes from services.

A review of these tools was commissioned in June 2023 and completed in March 2024. The review

found that, while development of the tools was well intentioned, the results are inconclusive and, therefore, do not achieve what was intended. The evaluation report (March 2024) is due to be published shortly and will be located on the following link:

<https://www.tewhātuora.govt.nz/corporate-information/news-and-updates/>

As such, your request for copy of the final report is refused under section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information requested will soon be publicly available.

Health NZ has stopped using the tools and will revert back to the previous prioritisation processes. Health NZ will also commence a new process to robustly look at waitlist prioritisation for Health NZ overall. The process will consider all factors that should be taken into account in setting a prioritisation method.

Should any new tool(s) or processes be developed, this will be done in line with the findings of the evaluation and will be rigorously assessed.

No decision to adopt a new tool or process has been taken at this time. Health NZ will take the time we need to undertake robust assessment work on whether a new tool should be put in place.

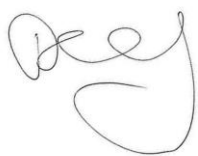
How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Peter Alsop

Chief Of Staff

Office of the Chief Executive