

17 February 2025

W. Forest
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Tēnā koe

Your request for official information, reference: HN200068782

Thank you for your email on 15 October 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Waikato hospital circulated on a memo dated 11 October 2024 with subject "English in a clinical setting"

The memo made a claim that "in the clinical setting, English [sic] language both spoken and written, supports clinical safety and, as such, the expectation is this will be adhered to."

My Official Information Act request is to obtain the supporting documents the decision makers - Sue Hayward (Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer) and David Bunting (Director Quality and Patient Safety) - used to create a new policy in the clinical setting.

I believe the supporting documents should include Human Rights Act assessment they - the decision makers - would have done to effect this policy.

Response

Firstly, Health NZ staff should absolutely feel supported and free to be themselves, to use their language, and celebrate their culture in our workplaces. We celebrate the diverse cultural backgrounds that our staff have and acknowledge the value that diversity can bring to ensuring we are responsive to the care that patients need whom also come from diverse community and cultural backgrounds.

There is no policy in place at Health NZ including at Waikato relating to English speaking in the clinical setting. The policy process at Waikato requires wide collaboration and consideration of human rights, legislative and regulatory requirements for health professionals, including cultural and linguistically diverse considerations.

The context of the internal memo from Waikato referred to, was a response led independently by the then Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer and the Director Quality and Patient Safety. It addressed requests from Charge Nurse Managers seeking clarity regarding safety of clinical handover information. The *Update on Language in Clinical Settings* from Chief Executive Margie Apa was shared with staff on 15 October 2024.

Please see this update attached as **Appendix One**.

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



Stephanie Doe

**Group Director Operations - Hospital and Specialist Services
Waikato District**