

21 July 2026

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Tēnā koe

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00205063

Thank you for your email on 24 June 2026, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

My understanding is that Ōtorohanga Dental travels to Tauranga and operates out of another dental practice for a day to provide free dental care to eligible Bay of Plenty Mental Health and Addiction service users.

Please provide

- 1. the description/scope of the dental service provided*
- 2. eligibility criteria*
- 3. referral pathways, referral forms, booking processes*
- 4. information given to MHA staff, NGOs, peer support workers, community providers, service users, or whānau about the service;*
- 5. any current internal guidance about how staff are expected to support MHA service users to access the service.*

On the 8 July 2026, we invited you to refine requests 4 & 5 to enable us to respond effectively. As no response was received, we have proceeded to respond to these parts of your request based on our interpretation of it.

Response

Mental wellbeing is fundamental to the lives of all New Zealanders. Health NZ are transforming the approach to mental wellbeing so people are supported to stay well and have access to help what works for them, when and where they need it. Our Mental Health and Addictions (MHA) teams around the country offer community support services to help people manage their own wellbeing. Community support services include but are not limited to; education and training, housing, sports and recreation, counselling and welfare.

For clarity I will respond to each request in turn.

1. The description/scope of the dental service provided

Health NZ purchases basic dental services from dental practices for mental health and addiction clients who are either living in specialised or individualised community support accommodation in the Bay of Plenty district. Basic dental services tend to include preventative treatments – fluoride varnish applications, restorative care – fillings or cavity repair, and extractions and root canals.

2. Eligibility criteria

MHA providers refer clients to Community Dentistry for basic dental treatment. Community Dentistry offers equitable dental care for all New Zealanders in a hospital, community, and public health settings.

Services under this agreement are designed to be targeted towards community MHA service users in the Bay of Plenty area who meet the following criteria:

- Has been or is a MHA services client for over two years.
- Has a serious mental health condition or addiction.
- Is a Community Services Card holder.
- Dental treatment is a documented part of the recovery plan/shared support plan.

Exclusions

Under this agreement, the following groups are excluded from treatment:

- Individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria above and/or are not living in specialised facilities or receiving Individualised Community Support.
- Individuals who are eligible for dental treatment through ACC.
- Individuals who are eligible for dental health services paid for by Work and Income NZ (WINZ) including Special Needs Grants for dental services.
- Individuals under the age of 18 years who are eligible for treatment under the Combined Dental Agreement (a Health NZ contract that pays dental practices to provide free dental care to adolescents).
- Individuals requiring sedation or general anaesthetic for dental treatment.

3. Referral pathways, referral forms, booking processes

A MHA care coordinator, case manager or general practitioner (GP) can submit a formal referral to dental care providers. All these providers have their own referral forms.

Referrals for dental services may be received from any of the following Health NZ-funded MHA providers in the Bay of Plenty:

- Living Independently Navigating Communities (LINC) Support;
- Dalcam Company Limited;
- Emerge Aotearoa Limited;
- Vincent House Recovery Trust;
- Health NZ Specialist Mental Health Services, including the Needs Assessment & Service Coordination team (NASC);
- Bay of Plenty Addiction Service (BOPAS);
- Te Tomika Trust;
- Te Rau O Te Huia Trust;
- Hanmer Clinic; or
- The Salvation Army Trust.

4. Information given to MHA staff, NGOs, peer support workers, community providers, service users, or whānau about the service

Health NZ is supported by many different service providers for MHA dental services in the Bay of Plenty. To respond to your request would require substantial manual collation and research to respond to and is therefore refused under section 18(f) of the OIA.

However, we can advise that Health NZ provides information to dental practices providing rural dental services periodically by way of variations and amendments to the agreement called Basic Dental Treatment for Mental Health and Methadone Patients. This information is provided to the practices by the Approving Dental Officer and Clinical Advisor from the Midland / Te Manawa Taki Region, Health NZ. Likewise, all treatment plans for dental services referred by Health NZ MHA teams are reviewed and approved by the Approving Dental Officer.

5. Any current internal guidance about how staff are expected to support MHA service users to access the service.

We have interpreted your request as the most recent information provided to MHA staff in Bay of Plenty about dental services for service users. Bay of Plenty MHA staff do not have any documents within scope of your request therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist. However, MHA staff support users of dental services by:

- assisting users to make appointments;
- discussing and checking referrals to the service;
- providing the referral pathway;
- providing information on the types of dental treatment provided and excluded; and
- explaining about the dental treatment and post treatment care.

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.

Nāku iti noa, nā

pp 

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