

On behalf of Debbie Brown, Acting General Counsel

Gloria,

Please find below response to your Official Information Act request dated 22 May 2018:

1. Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by the Bay of Plenty District Health Board for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available:

- Hormone therapy
- Mastectomy
- Hysterectomy
- Orchiectomy
- Facial hair removal
- Breast augmentation
- Voice training

There is not set funding in place for these services however the DHB understands that in the event that a case for gender-affirming healthcare services is approved as per the high cost treatment pool that the DHB will have responsibilities to provide adjunct services in support of the approved services.

2. Could you please provide information about the process of accessing those services that are available?

Access would be via referral to specialist services

Specifically, is an assessment by a mental health professional required in order to access gender-affirming healthcare services? If so, which services?

Yes, an assessment is required by a mental health professional in order to access all gender affirming healthcare services

In the case of hormone therapy, can primary health providers prescribe hormones, or does this have to be initially approved by an endocrinologist?

Hormone therapy is initially approved by an endocrinologist.

Is any period of real life experience required to access surgery?

This question is unclear.

3. Finally, could you please advise what the process is if transgender patients require one of the above services, but the Bay of Plenty District Health Board does not offer this service? Does the Bay of Plenty District Health Board currently fund patients to travel to other areas to access this healthcare?

Patients eligible for services located out of district would be funded to travel according to National Transport and Accommodation (NTA) criteria.

Regards,

Cherie Martin

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#### GLORIA RESPONSE:

Kia ora Cherie,

Could you please clarify a few points for me:

From your response it seems that the Bay of Plenty DHB only provides services once care is approved via the high cost treatment pool - is this correct? I ask as the Ministry of Health website notes that patients must have been on hormone therapy for 12 months and must provide 3 reports from mental health professionals in order to qualify for funding through the high cost treatment pool. Does this mean that patients in the Bay of Plenty district must self-fund hormone therapy and mental health assessments?

Or, does the response mean that services may be provided on a case by case basis without high cost treatment pool approval? If so, could you please advise which services might be funded?

In regards to the question about real life experience being unclear, please see the Ministry of Health definition of real life experience: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/prev...>

Ngā mihi,

Gloria Fraser

#### DHB RESPONSE:

Relative to other priorities, if the Endocrine Service has capacity to meet the referred demand (the patients are prioritised for access to the endocrine service) then the endocrine service would initiate treatment, or advise a primary care practitioner of the treatment protocol that is appropriate. In many DHBs the day to day management of the endocrine needs of the actively transitioning, or the stable transitioned person, are managed by trans-friendly General Practitioners.

Mental health assessments would be treated in the same way by the DHB (ie, if the service has capacity to meet the demand and within normal prioritisation decisions).

Regards,

Cherie Martin