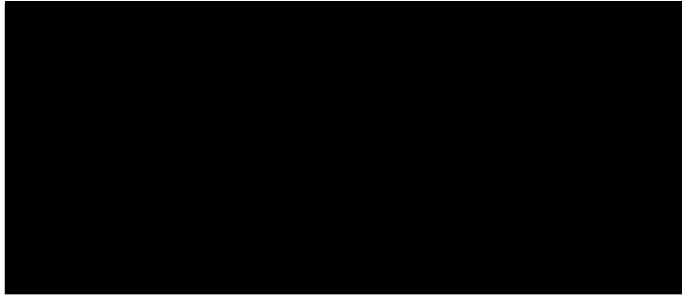


16 March 2020



Re Official Information Request – Mental health patients who have left district health board facilities

I refer to your official information request dated 7 February 2020 requesting the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Official Information Act related to mental health patients who have left district health board facilities.

Please state how many patients detained under the Mental Health Act have:

1. Left a DHB-operated open or secure facility/ward in the past seven years, 2013 to present, when they were not supposed to or were supposed to return through;
 - a) escorted leave;
 - b) unescorted leave;
 - c) escape;
 - d) transfer;
 - e) weekend or day leave;
 - f) any other way.

Please break down by year and type of facility.

At Auckland DHB we have 6 inpatient/residential mental health units, as listed in the table below. This table also includes the total number of beds at each unit. Each year reported is a calendar year. Data on patients Absent Without Leave (AWOL) was extracted from the Auckland DHB incident management system (the incident reporting system changed in April 2016 from Risk Monitor Pro to

Datix), and then matched with Mental Health Act (MHA) data. A small number of reports were unable to be matched with MHA data due to a lack of an identifier.

Please note that this data is a count of incidents and not of individuals (i.e. one individual may have had more than one AWOL episode). Some of the incidents reflected in the data below will be a "technical" AWOL in that a patient has been late returning from approved leave.

Also note that the inpatient Mother and Baby Unit commenced in October 2014. At the same time the number of Child and Adolescent Acute Inpatient beds reduced by 3. There is a significant increase in the number of AWOLs from the adult acute inpatient unit in 2019. This reflects a change from having the two general wards locked most of the time to them becoming unlocked from April 2019, in line with providing a least restrictive care environment.

Inpatient/residential unit (no. beds)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total (All Years)
Adult Acute Inpt Unit (58)	24	13	23	32	32	22	111	257
Child & Adolescent Acute Inpt Unit (18)	15	14	17	57	31	13	4	151
Mother & Baby Acute Inpt Unit (3 + 1 flexi-bed)			1	1		1		3
Older Adult Acute Inpt Unit (15)			2	2	1	5	4	14
Rehabilitation Inpt Unit (40)	22	17	28	5	1	8	5	86
Eating Disorders Residential Unit (9)				1				1
Total (All Services)	61	44	71	98	65	49	124	512

2. Please state how many of those patients who left while under DHB mental health care died by suicide or suspected suicide. Please break down by year, ethnicity and gender.

There were 3 patients who died by suicide or suspected suicide within those years, who were AWOL from an inpatient unit and under the MHA. Auckland DHB is unable to provide you with any further breakdown of the patients as requested as this would risk the patients being identifiable. Therefore, Auckland DHB declines the second part of this question under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act as withholding the information is necessary to protect the privacy of those patients.

3. Please state how many of those patients disappeared and were never found again

Obtaining this information would require searching through each individual's clinical record, therefore, we are declining this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

4. Please state how many of those patients suffered an adverse event/trauma through the unapproved departure; ie raped, robbed, assaulted, accidental death or homicide etc.

We are declining this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

5. Please state for the same time frame the number of patients who died INSIDE the DHB-run mental health facility and type of death, eg suicide, suspected suicide, accidental death, illness etc.

The following table shows the number of deaths of patients while an inpatient (and not on leave or AWOL), including inpatients recently transferred to a medical ward. Patients may or may not have been under the MHA at the time of death:

Year	Suicide/suspected suicide	Accidental death	Illness/Medical
2013	Nil	Nil	Nil
2014	Nil	Nil	2
2015	Nil	Nil	Nil
2016	Nil	Nil	2
2017	Nil	Nil	1
2018	1	Nil	Nil
2019	1	Nil	1

If this request is not applicable to your DHB, for example the DHB does not have mental health facilities, please respond acknowledging that.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive

