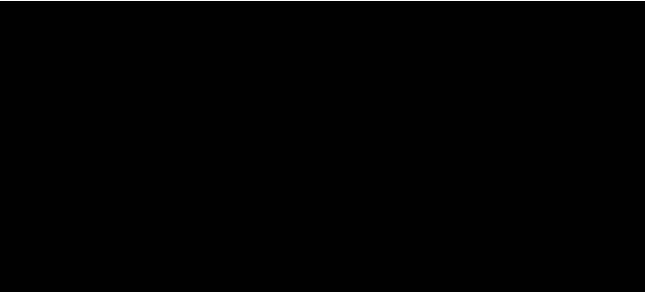


17 December 2018



Re Official Information Act Request for children given hormone blockers

I refer to your Official Information Act request of 19 November 2018 for the following information:

This year, how many children have been given the hormone blockers Lupron or Zoladex through Hauora Tāhine? Please provide a table that also includes figures for 2017, 2016, 2015 and 2014. In the table, please break the children down into ages.

Currently, gender affirming services are delivered across Metro-Auckland by two services: Auckland Sexual Health delivers an Adult service, via Auckland DHB; and the Centre for Youth Health deliver a Youth service, via Counties Manukau DHB. Both services offer outpatient clinics across Metro-Auckland to the populations of Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau DHBs.

The CfYH services for gender affirming care have been running in Counties Manukau since 2012 and commenced in the Auckland DHB area in July 2016 and in Waitemata DHB area in January 2017. Prior to these dates, cases may have been seen in a variety of clinical areas.

More information on the current service is available here:

- <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/hauora-tahine-pathways-to-transgender-healthcare/>
- <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/paediatrics/kidz-first-centre-for-youth-health/>
- <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/sexual-health/northern-region-transgender-health-services/>

We note that your query is specific to prescription of hormone blockers for children.

We are not able to provide all of the data you requested, due to the manually intensive nature of reviewing patient files by a specialist health clinician, and lack of electronic flags to indicate which files should be reviewed for this treatment detail. We do not electronically 'code' information from outpatient clinics, and so the information is only held in individual medical files (largely paper based). We have considered options to further respond to this request with both the clinical team at the Centre for Youth Health and the CMDHB clinical analytics team.

To provide the information you have requested from paper-based medical files would require us to review in excess of 1,200 Centre for Youth Health patient referrals and individual medical files over the 5 years. These would need review to identify cases referred for gender dysphoria healthcare, and to extract and collate the details of patient demographics (ages) and any treatment options discussed or progressed as per your questions. Reviewing the clinical medical files would require a clinical specialist in Youth Health to be diverted from direct patient care to complete this type of manual file review. The service does not have the clinician capacity to complete this process.

We therefore refuse your request for data on this topic prior to 2014, under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, due to substantial collation or research.

We can, however, provide some information prepared in response to other Official Information Act requests in 2017 related to gender affirming healthcare. We previously prepared a snapshot summary of people receiving gender affirming care on the Centre for Youth Health caseload in the Auckland region (in May 2018). These were all people under 18 years of age at that time, and we established detail including the number of patients being seen at a point in time (Dec 2017), their DHB of domicile and those on puberty blocker hormones.

This information is provided in the table below.

DHB of domicile	On CfYH caseload for gender affirming review / care	On 'hormone blockers' [#] prescribed by a CfYH Doctor
Auckland	31	18
Waitemata	36	16
Counties Manukau	30	21

as at 31/12/2017 - aged under 18 years

in this OIA use of the term 'hormone blockers', refers to leuprorelin and goserelin

This data does not include use of other hormones for menstrual suppression etc.

Further, we note the following points by way of additional context.

- The Auckland metro DHBs are committed to improving the health outcomes for all people in our community. We regard gender as a self-identified attribute, and only relevant if it affects clinical treatment. We acknowledge that our gender-diverse communities have both general health needs (e.g., chronic conditions, mental health and primary care needs), and have specific health needs that relate to gender identity and transition. All health providers have a duty to deliver services that are respectful to our entire community.
- These service numbers should be considered in the context of more than 316,000 children living in the Auckland region. This data will not include all young people with gender dysphoria in the region, just those currently on the caseload at CfYH.
- Referrals to the CfYH services are for specialist care for gender diverse young people who request medical review. These referrals do not always result in commencement of hormone therapy or puberty blockers.
- For young people, it is more common than in the adult gender affirming services to be solely on hormone blockers, and not receiving gender reassignment hormone therapy.

- In theory, any prescriber can prescribe these medications (hormone blockers). In practice, we believe most young people under the age of 18 years in metro Auckland will have these started by specialist services, which in most instances will be Centre for Youth Health. Continuation of these may be in primary care, with Specialist oversight and review.
- The determination of readiness for hormones is an ongoing assessment undertaken by the clinical team, and involving the young person together with family and any other significant support people. The assessment is through clinical assessment and discussion that will cover a range of topics. These include (but are not limited to) a patient's gender identity and feelings about their body, patient goals (treatment specific and life-long), health history and assessment, support networks and strategies, the effects of feminising/ masculinising medications, understanding of long-term health risks of medications and the informed consent processes.

You have the right under the Official Information Act to seek an investigation and review of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours faithfully


Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive

