

19 October 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

**Re Official Information Request for fax machines in Auckland DHB**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request of 21 September 2018 seeking the following information:

***how many fax machines are on DHB property, how they are used and answers to the following:***

- 1. Does the DHB still rely on fax services to transfer/send/receive patient files and documents?***
- 2. If so, is the DHB aware of the insecurities fax machines pose, including leaving themselves open to hacking? How secure are the machines used?***
- 3. Why is the DHB still using old outdated technology and not fax to email, etc?***
- 4. What security measures are in place to support safe, private transfer of documents?***
- 5. Should the machines be phased out?***
- 6. Has the DHB implemented Oracle software, or does it plan to?***

The information you have requested follows

**1. Does the DHB still rely on fax services to transfer/send/receive patient files and documents?**

Faxes are being phased out and an electronic process is being introduced. Faxes are still being used during the transition to a fully electronic transfer of information and documents within an encrypted secure network. Fax machines are being removed as new processes are put in place.

Auckland DHB has implemented policies, procedures and systems to ensure the privacy of patient information is protected. There are strict rules outlined in the Auckland DHB Information Privacy and Security policy. The policy requires the remaining fax machines still in use to be located in secured areas where access is only available to authorised staff.

**2. If so, is the DHB aware of the insecurities fax machines pose, including leaving themselves open to hacking? How secure are the machines used?**

The organisation is fully aware of vulnerabilities with fax machines. Extensive security measures are in place to block malicious activity.

**3. Why is the DHB still using old outdated technology and not fax to email, etc?**

Auckland DHB has a number of legacy systems that are paper based and we are introducing electronic means of transferring information over time, including electronic referrals and secure email between DHBs and other agencies. We use fax-to-email technology for non-electronic referrals. We also send patient information to GPs electronically, including lab and radiology results, discharge summaries and referral outcomes. In addition, a large amount of clinical data is stored in a secure, protected repository (TestSafe) that approved healthcare providers can access.

**4. What security measures are in place to support safe, private transfer of documents?**

Auckland DHB uses Healthlink to transfer documents securely to GPs and other primary care providers. Encrypted email is also in use as well as password protection of attachments when recipients are not able to receive encrypted emails.

**5. Should the machines be phased out?**

As previously noted, fax machines are being phased out.

**6. Has the DHB implemented Oracle software, or does it plan to?**

Yes we currently use Oracle software. Auckland DHB shares a regional instance of Oracle with the other northern region DHBs and healthAlliance. Note this is separate from the National Oracle Solution.

I trust this information answers your questions.

Under the Official Information Act section 28 you are entitled to seek a review of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://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**