



BAY OF PLENTY
DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD
HAUORA A TOI

Cnr Clarke St & 20th Ave
Private Bag 12024
Tauranga 3143
New Zealand
Phone 07 579 8000

OIA REQUEST

Received: 13 April 2021
Due: 13 May 2021
Response Date: 13 May 2021
Subject: Flight Nurses

In response to your request under the Official Information Act, please find our response below:

Request

1. How many currently registered flight nurses are employed by the DHB?
2. What is the average remuneration of currently registered flight nurses employed by the DHB by qualification and seniority bands?
3. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?
4. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?
5. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?
6. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?
7. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?
8. For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?
9. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for fixed wing aircraft?
10. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for rotary wing aircraft?
11. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?
12. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?
13. What advice has the DHB provided to the Simpson Review team relating to patient transfers by aircraft?
14. What growth forecasts has the DHB completed or commissioned relating to interhospital transfer demand?
15. Who is the DHB currently under contract with to provide interhospital transfer by aircraft, when does the contract expire and what right of renewals exist within the contract?

Response

- 1. How many currently registered flight nurses are employed by the DHB?**
There are 10 flight nurses in the DHB. Seven have permanent positions and three are casual. There is an FTE of 2.1.
- 2. What is the average remuneration of currently registered flight nurses employed by the DHB by qualification and seniority bands?**
Registered flight nurses employed by the DHB are paid \$77,386.00 pa which is Step 7 of the MECA. Additional staffing costs are based on penal rate entitlement as per the MECA agreement.



3. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?**

Tauranga has no fixed wing services based here. Our fixed wing work is completed by various providers around the country. The work is infrequent and mainly repatriations of BOP domiciled patients. Previous years records are not electronic and require manual search of flight transfer paper-based documents therefore, the data may not be accurate.

18/19	57
19/20	62
20/21	62

4. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how many flight hours have been charged to the DHB for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?**

18/19	231
19/20	180
20/21	122 to date – 9 months data included / 3 month yet to occur

5. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by fixed wing aircraft?**

18/19	255,634
19/20	210,894
20/21	138,831 9 months data included / 3 month yet to occur

6. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, how much has the DHB spent with third parties for interhospital transfers by rotary wing aircraft?**

18/19	1.11m
19/20	1,261,552
20/21	1,099,782

7. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?**

Most flights would be repatriations from various centres around NZ but low in individual numbers.

Fixed wing transfers that we have organised from BOP would be predominantly Whakatane to Auckland and these would be infrequent also.

8. **For each of the last 3 complete financial years, what is the total number of flights for each destination for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?**

These are the flights the DHB pays for – not total number of flights.

18/19	Auckland	48
	Waikato	83
19/20	Auckland	27
	Waikato	85
20/21	Auckland	29
	Waikato	90

9. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for fixed wing aircraft?

Performance measured by annual external auditing (Telarc) and compliance with, and certification to, Air Ambulance NZ, ISO9001 and NZS8156 standards.

10. What metrics does the DHB use to measure service performance of service providers providing interhospital transfer services to the DHB for rotary wing aircraft?

Service Performance is measured by NASO who work for both the MOH and ACC. They have specific requirements and KPIs that the contract holders report on and targets they are required to meet. There are also several industry standards such as Air Ambulance/ Air Search and Rescue Service Standard and NZS 8156 which both cover IHT work. NASO service specs are posted here on the Ministry of Health website:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/national-ambulance-sector-office-naso/emergency-ambulance-services-eas/eas-providers/emergency-ambulance-service-generic-service-agreements>

11. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for fixed wing aircraft?

The patient's DHB of domicile agrees with the transporting provider the transport option best suited, as that DHB will be covering the costs. Fixed wing is often non-urgent and where possible, sharing of the aircraft occurs and the bill is split determined on the sectors flown.

12. What business rules or agreements are in place with other DHBs for cost sharing for interhospital transfers for rotary wing aircraft?

A standard agreement between all DHBs across the country, therefore all DHBs operate under the understanding of 'where the patient lives', pays. Agreed at national CEO level.

The process is invoice based, where NASO has determined the hourly rate and invoices DHBs for interhospital transfers (IHTs) hours flown. This was first established through a variation to the Crown Funding Agreement.

DHBs are responsible for funding IHTs, however, there are two business rules for when IHTs are funded by either the Ministry or ACC.

The Ministry will pay for an urgent IHT where a patient is transferred from one medical facility to another within three hours of arriving at the first facility. The exception to this rule is the northern region.

ACC will pay for an urgent IHT when a patient is transferred from one publicly funded hospital to another within 24 hours of arriving at the first hospital, as long as that first hospital could not be reasonably expected to meet patient needs (eg if a service is usually available at that facility, but at that particular time due to staff absence was not).

For each calendar month, DHBs are sent a list of IHT missions where the patients have been domiciled to that DHB. These missions exclude all missions where the provider indicates the mission is an ACC 24-hour rule IHT.

The DHB reviews the missions sent and advises if they accept the cost of the IHT or whether the cost of the IHT should be elsewhere i.e. Ministry of Health for 3-hour rule missions or another DHB.

Missions that are advised that fall under the 3-hour rule are checked with St John and those that are found to fall outside the rule are resent to DHBs. Additionally, missions that should be sent to another DHB are also sent.

DHBs are invoiced for all accepted missions for each quarter.

13. What advice has the DHB provided to the Simpson Review team relating to patient transfers by aircraft?

BOPDHB has not provided advice to the Simpson Review team on patient transfers.

14. What growth forecasts has the DHB completed or commissioned relating to interhospital transfer demand?

The following is commentary based on local discussion, and participation at national air- ambulance review working groups;

BOPDHB has considered the growth or changes in location of tertiary services which directly impacts on transportation requirements. For example, we are aware Waikato may soon be the preferred provider for stroke clot retrievals therefore, BOPDHB flight transfers to Auckland will decrease. Any other future regional service provision changes are likely to change demand for Tauranga based flight service.

15. Who is the DHB currently under contract with to provide interhospital transfer by aircraft, when does the contract expire and what right of renewals exist within the contract?

CAARL (Central Air Ambulance Rescue Limited) is the contract holder for our region and SRSL (Search and Rescue Services Limited) are the service provider. Both the local helicopter and the Tertiary Air ambulance service are both under this organisation.

The exception to this is Paediatric Intensive Care Unit and Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) work which is provided by Auckland and under the Northern Region Air Ambulance contracts.

The contract with CAARL expires March 2024 and there is no specific entitlement to Right of Renewal.

Please note that this response may be published on our website as part of our proactive release practice.

Yours sincerely



DEBBIE BROWN

Senior Advisor Governance and Quality