



18 June 2019

Aarti Singh

Email: fyi-request-10432-ee633d67@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Aarti,

Re: Official Information Act request – Assaults on staff members in 2018

Thank you for your Official Information Act request of 3 June 2019 seeking the following from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB):

I would like to request

- ***The total number of assaults on staff recorded in 2018***
 - ***breakdown of these numbers by staff type eg. Nurse, admin staff, resident medical officer***
 - ***breakdown of these numbers by department type which the assault happened in eg. Medical, surgical, mental health***
 - ***the number of assaults which resulted in head injuries***

Waitematā DHB serves the largest population of any district health board in New Zealand, currently standing at around 630,000 people. There is a direct link between the size of our population and the significant scale of services we provide and the opportunity for aggression towards our staff.

Waitematā DHB has a workforce of more than 7,500 staff spread across more than 80 sites. In addition to caring for our own population, we also provide regional services in forensic psychiatry and child disability services. We are also the metropolitan Auckland provider of child and adolescent dental services, and community alcohol and drug services.

Ultimately, our employees deal with a broad cross-section of the community in their day-to-day work and this often involves reaching out to people when they are at their most vulnerable and anxious, including those with mental health conditions, which can result in unpredictable behaviours. Caution is, therefore, advised in comparing raw event numbers between different district health boards unless it is clear that their clinical caseload is of similar complexity.

Waitematā DHB encourages the reporting of assault and promotes a policy of ensuring that the safety and security of staff and patients is approached in line with our organisational values as follows:

Everyone Matters

We have a responsibility to be welcoming and respectful and to listen, while maintaining the personal safety of our staff. We will equip staff with strategies to manage care where behaviour is a concern, whether it is their own or the behaviour of others.

Our approach will be professional and consistent wherever care is delivered, be it in hospital, a community facility or at home.

We all have a responsibility to report risks and incidents and to take care of ourselves and others - to not walk by.

With Compassion

Safety and security initiatives will protect personal dignity and will be as unobtrusive as possible. If someone's behaviour compromises the safety of others, we will ensure a fair and balanced response. We will be attentive to people's individual circumstances and provide an opportunity for people to modify behaviour before using security measures.

Connected

All safety and security initiatives will link with our Engagement Strategy to make sure we stay connected to our community and colleagues. We will have clear boundaries for behaviour which are documented in straightforward terms and readily available to staff and the community. Security risks will be clearly communicated across services to enable team work and promote staff safety.

Better, Best, Brilliant

Security measures contribute to a safe, secure and supportive environment for everybody. We will continue to look for innovative ways to improve services and provide a positive experience for everyone.

In response to your request, we refer you to the Waitematā District Health Board website, where you will find the most-recent Board papers.

<http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz/about-us/leadership/board-meetings/>

The information you specifically require can be found in the Health and Safety performance report of each Board agenda.

Our routine reporting does not feature information on which profession was involved in an incident or which specific body part may have been injured. To answer this question would require substantial collation and research as we would have to review more than 800 incident records to extract this level of detail.

Waitematā DHB has considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for collating this information would assist us in managing the work involved. Based on a conservative estimate of 10 minutes per record to be reviewed, this equates to more than 130 hours' work. We have formed the view that this could not be absorbed in addition to normal staff duties and that charging for this time would not assist us in managing the work required.

Therefore, we have decided to refuse this part of your request under s18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982. If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you are entitled to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman, whose details are available via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Waitematā DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare.

This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona McCarthy', written over the printed name.

Fiona McCarthy
Director Human Resources
Waitemata District Health Board