

31 March 2014

Mr Dave Body
fyi-request-1510-d9340c92@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Body

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your emailed request of 4 March 2014, asking for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. The number and value of lumbar spine inter-body fusion procedures funded by the ACC in each of the last 5 years, subdivided into (i) anterior lumbar inter-body fusions, (ii) posterior lumbar inter-body fusions, (iii) transforaminal lumbar inter-body fusions, (iv) axial lumbar inter-body fusions, (v) lateral lumbar inter-body fusions and (vi) all other types of lumbar inter-body fusions; and
2. The number and value of cervical spine inter-body fusion procedures funded by the ACC in each of the last 5 years, subdivided into (i) anterior cervical inter-body fusions and (ii) all other types of cervical inter-body fusions; and
3. The number and value of thoracic spine inter-body fusion procedures funded by the ACC in each of the last 5 years.

In an earlier response dated 26 February 2014, ACC provided you with information about the total number of inter-body fusion services from 2008 to 2013, and the total costs of those services as funded by ACC. You subsequently submitted the above mentioned information request, which asked for more specific details about the varied inter-body fusion procedures that may be performed.

ACC will respond to your questions in the order that you have listed them.

1. ***The number and value of lumbar spine inter-body fusion procedures funded by the ACC in each of the last 5 years, subdivided into (i) anterior lumbar inter-body fusions, (ii) posterior lumbar inter-body fusions, (iii) transforaminal lumbar inter-body fusions, (iv) axial lumbar inter-body fusions, (v) lateral lumbar inter-body fusions and (vi) all other types of lumbar inter-body fusions***

ACC does not record this level of detail centrally. If the information is available it will be stored in the notes on the individual claim file. ACC can extract broad, general information about inter-body-spinal fusion surgery by relying on service or payments codes used in its client database (as per your earlier OIA request). However, ACC does not have more specific service or payment codes that allow the identification of the six different procedures you have asked about.

ACC is not able to provide this information because it cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. This decision complies with section 18(f) of the Act.

2. *The number and value of cervical spine inter-body fusion procedures funded by the ACC in each of the last 5 years, subdivided into (i) anterior cervical inter-body fusions and (ii) all other types of cervical inter-body fusions*

As with the response to your first question, there are service/payment coding limitations that restrict the easy identification of the numerous types of inter-body fusion procedures paid for by ACC. In this instance, ACC is aware that the same service item code may be used to pay for more than one type of inter-body fusion. So while general information can be centrally collated about total payments made for inter-body fusions, ACC would need to review all the claims file involved to classify the specific procedure undertaken.

Accordingly, ACC is not able to provide this information because it cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. This decision complies with section 18(f) of the Act.

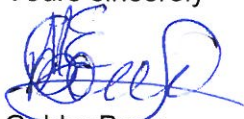
3. *The number and value of thoracic spine inter-body fusion procedures funded by the ACC in each of the last 5 years.*

As with ACC's responses to your first and second questions, ACC is unable to provide this information because it cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. This decision complies with section 18(f) of the Act.

You can contact me at gabby.boag@acc.co.nz if you have any questions about this letter. If you're unhappy with ACC's response, you may make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. You can call them on 0800 802 602 between 9am and 5pm on weekdays, or write to:

The Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Gabby Boag
Senior Advisor