



7 May 2021

N Vaughan

Via email: [fyi-request-15151-862848bc@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-15151-862848bc@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear N Vaughan

**Re: OIA request – Gifts to medical staff from pharmaceutical companies**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 13 April 2021 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about gifts given by pharmaceutical companies to medical staff.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,600 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

**1. Do you keep a central gift register, which records details about what gifts medical staff receive, who they are from, and the gift's value? If not, why not?**

Yes, Waitematā DHB keeps a central gift register.

**2. How many staff in your DHB have accepted gifts (of any form) from pharmaceutical companies? Information from the past two-year period is preferred, including what these gifts were, and their monetary value.**

Our policy, detailed below, allows for staff to accept gifts or benefits under the value of \$100. Our central gift register indicates that no gifts or benefits over the value of \$100 have been received by any staff.

**3. Is there any policy in place that prevents medical staff from accepting some gifts from pharmaceutical companies? If so, please send a copy of this policy.**

**In relation to disclosure of these gifts (from pharmaceutical companies):**

Please see the following extract, which is taken from our Pharmaceutical Company Sales Representatives and Pharmaceutical Samples policy:

4. Gifts/Benefits from Suppliers	
Situation	Recommended Action
<p>Accepting gifts / benefits from suppliers of goods or services.</p> <p>Acceptance of a gift or other benefit from a supplier can be perceived as encouraging or obliging the employee to favour that supplier.</p>	<p>An employee may accept a gift or benefit freely given by a supplier if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The gift is an inexpensive Christmas gift or a token of appreciation or a minor industry give-away e.g. a diary, a calendar, pens.</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The gift/benefit/hospitality is for the employee personally and;</li> <li>The total value does not exceed \$100 and;</li> <li>The employee's Manager agrees that it is appropriate to accept</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When a gift/benefit worth more than \$100 is accepted, advice of that acceptance must be emailed to the employee's General Manager. (GMs must advise the CEO of any benefits they accept).</li> <li>Offers of sponsorship to attend clinical conferences should be discussed with the clinician's Clinical Director before acceptance. Offers accepted must be reported to the clinician's General Manager.</li> </ul>	

**3. When must medical staff disclose these gifts to the hospital or DHB? If there is a related policy, please send a copy.**

Medical staff must disclose a gift or benefit when it is in excess of \$100, as above.

**5. Are medical staff required to disclose these gifts to their patients? If there is a related policy, please send a copy.**

Medical staff are not required to disclose gifts to their patients, however, the following restrictions are in place for the use of free medication samples that have been provided by pharmaceutical companies (extract from our Pharmaceutical Company Sales Representatives and Pharmaceutical Samples policy):

6. Pharmaceutical Samples
<p><b>6.1 Permitted Use of Samples</b></p> <p>Samples are not to be given to WDHB staff as part of a promotion. Medication samples may be used under the following circumstances:</p> <p><b>Outpatients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an initial supply until a special authority number can be obtained. Under these circumstances, it is the prescriber's responsibility to establish that the patient will qualify for ongoing funded treatment before the initial supply is prescribed.</li> <li>To provide a supply of a new medication for a trial period, after which the patient will obtain further supply by way of a standard prescription. If the medication is non-funded or partially funded, it is the prescriber's responsibility to explain the approximate cost of the medication and make it clear to the patient that the costs of any ongoing supply will have to be met by the patient.</li> </ul> <p><b>Inpatients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All requests for the use of free 'sample' pharmaceutical stock for experiential use in the Inpatient setting must be authorised by the Pharmacy &amp; Therapeutics Committee</li> <li>If the 'sample' stock is not listed in the Hospital Medicine List, PHARMAC must also be notified</li> </ul> <p><b>6.2 Medicines Supply</b></p> <p>All pharmaceuticals, including free stock, for use within WDHB must be received, stored and distributed / dispensed by the WDHB Pharmacy Department.</p>

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community 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 consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Peta Molloy**  
**Board Secretary**  
**Waitematā District Health Board**