

07 October 2021

Michael Vaughan

E: [fyi-request-16802-906337e6@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-16802-906337e6@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Michael

**Official information request W21-663 on Covid Treatment Protocol**

I refer to your official information request dated 19 September and received in this office on 01 October following a transfer from the Ministry of Health.

**Request:**

- 1) What is the Covid-19 treatment protocol for hospitalised cases?
- 2) Are some DHB's following different treatment protocols from others?
- 3) Are DHB's free to make decisions about treatments for individuals with Covid-19?
- 4) To what extent are patients able to participate in decision-making about their treatment programmes?
- 5) If a patient requests a blood test for Vitamin D and/or the administration of high dosage Vitamin C, are hospital staff able to provide these?
- 6) Do hospital staff have the right to refuse a patient's request and, if so, is there a process for a patient to appeal the decision?

**Response:**

- 1) The Covid-19 treatment protocol is consistent with how we deliver care to any person being admitted with an infectious respiratory illness and is dependent on many factors like comorbidities and severity of the disease. There are additional infection prevention and control requirements based around an airborne virus which includes the use of personal protective equipment and isolation. This is not entirely dissimilar to some other illnesses that require similar management plans within the in hospital environment.

Our usual management of care for patients requiring respiratory support would apply, with support from the regional intensive care network for ongoing management of intensive care unit level care requirements. Significant simulation and training has been undertaken to prepare staff for the management of this particular patient group.

- 2) Wairarapa DHB can only provide information as to our own protocols as we do not hold the information for other DHB's.
- 3) The Consultant responsible for the care of the patient would, in collaboration with the patient and whanau, formulate a plan of care suitable for their needs.

- 4) Patients are at the centre of any care being delivered and will always be given options and advice from the health professionals supporting them through their illness. Care pathways are adapted to individual circumstances as much as possible.
- 5) Wairarapa DHB is able to test for Vitamin D in consultation with patients and when clinically indicated. High dose Vitamin C injections are not supported by Pharmac via the HML. Their use is governed under section 29 of the Medicines Act, therefore, we would not at this stage be able to routinely deliver them at this hospital. Oral Vitamin C is, however, a routinely prescribed medication.
- 6) We work in collaboration with the patient and their advocate(s) to ascertain their wishes following the advice they receive from the Health Professionals in charge of their care. The process is a negotiation, but the patient must consent to treatment and is able to refuse at any point. If requests are unable to be accommodated, patients are kept fully informed of reasoning and any alternatives that can be pursued for them as part of their care planning.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Wairarapa District Health Board website no less than one week after the response has been provided to you. Any personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. The DHB will endeavour to resolve any concerns you should raise but, subject to any legal grounds for withholding, ultimately reserves the right to publish any information.

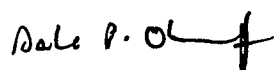
If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact:

OIA Coordinator

Email: [OIArequest@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz](mailto:OIArequest@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz)

Ph: 06 946 9800

Yours sincerely



Dale Oliff

Chief Executive