



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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26 January 2022

Andrew McGregor

Email: fyi-request-17690-28706637@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Andrew

RE Official information request WCDHB 9649

We refer to your email dated 23 November 2021 to the Ministry of Health which they subsequently transferred to us on 22 December 2021, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB. Specifically:

1. “What are the official Guidelines/procedures for urgent X-rays (24 hour)”

Urgent X-rays are requested based on clinical assessment and clinical urgency for an individual patient. Some radiology investigations cannot be performed on the West Coast; Canterbury DHB undertake these for West Coast. We have an on-call based radiology service at Te Nikau Grey Hospital that operates 24/7 incorporating X-ray and CT scanning. Urgent X-ray/CT cases are performed as soon as possible or as fits the clinical picture or patient situation. We note that “24 hour” is not the most acute referral pathway, with “immediate” and “4 hours” being the higher priority cases. Some 24 hour cases may need immediate imaging and some come back for a scan within the 24 hour period – so that what occurs with the 24 hour period is variant case by case, in consultation with the referring team and/or the patient.

2. “What are the Guidelines/procedures for patients repeatedly admitted to Emergency Department with severe epigastric pain/ and upper right and left quadrant pain”

Repeated presentations for a similar clinical condition are assessed at each presentation. Community and Hospital Health Pathways are used to guide clinical staff with investigation and diagnosis along with guidance on referral pathways to specialist clinical services when required.

3. “Guidelines/procedure for investigating possible Colonic Motility Dysfunction/Defecatory Disorders/Anorectal Dysfunction”

Patients with lower colonic disorders will initially be managed by their primary care provider using Community HealthPathways. These are part of a series of clinical and referral guidelines that is outlined electronically and is available to clinicians on our West Coast Healthpathways system. Access to this system is limited to health professionals working within the West Coast Health System. The information in these pathway supports clinicians to prescribe, refer and monitor health requests and treatment according to agreed ways of working in the West Coast and Canterbury DHBs.

Guidelines on referral to General Surgery or General Medicine at Te Nikau Grey Hospital are within the Healthpathway. Te Nikau based Specialists will refer patients to Canterbury DHB General Surgery or Gastroenterology for investigation and management when the tertiary level services are required to assist members of our community.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB websites.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RLS', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Ralph La Salle
Senior Manager, OIAs
Planning, Funding & Decision Support