



Health and Disability Commissioner
Te Toihau Hauora, Hauātanga

11 August 2023

Aaron Goodwin

By email: fyi-request-23503-e00b5801@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Mr Goodwin

Re: Information request
Our ref: E23HDC01256

Thank you for your email of 16 July 2023, received 17 July 2023, requesting:

“With regard to complaints about treatment in public hospitals only, I am seeking your assistance in helping to establish whether or not there has been an increase in patient complaints regarding bullying, discrimination, and negligence since the time that public hospitals started limiting the number of chaperones, family members, and other support persons patients are allowed to have with them during provider-patient interactions.

I think it appropriate to set the start date for the information I require as the beginning of the first Covid-19 lockdown, continuing through until the filing of this OIA request. This is reasonable because the vast majority of hospitals have maintained the same or similar degree of visitor restrictions until the time of writing this OIA request.

Rationale:

Since becoming the victim of medical negligence and the target of bullying by certain doctors from Christchurch public hospital since making my dissatisfaction known, I have started networking with other New Zealanders who have experienced the same or similar ill-treatment. A trend we're noticing is that bullying and negligence seems to be experienced by patients more frequently when they are alone and vulnerable - with no or limited support people around them. This is in contrast to experiencing a higher level of professionalism and respect when flanked by support persons such as family and friends in the hospital setting.

I am trying to ascertain whether or not unprofessional conduct and negligence on the part of nurses, doctors, and reception staff is more common when patients are isolated from their support networks (read witnesses).”

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 and the Privacy Act 2020.

Please find **enclosed** the requested information.

The data below is based on complaints received over the period 25 March 2020 – 20 July 2023. Annual complaint totals are for complaints received during the given calendar year.

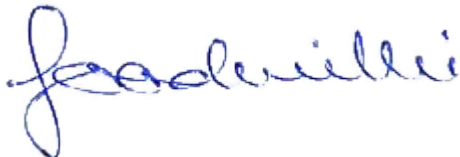
You asked for information on whether there had been an increase in patient complaints regarding bullying, discrimination, and negligence in public hospitals since the first COVID-19 lockdown beginning 25 March 2020.

The data in the table below relates to complaints received by HDC that contain the terms ‘bullying’, ‘discrimination’, and ‘negligence’ (including variations of these terms) over the period 25 March 2020 – 20 July 2023. The data is based on what is articulated to HDC by the complainant in their original complaint. It may be, that on further assessment, some of these issues were not found to be clinically and/or factually substantiated.

Complaints containing reference to bullying, discrimination and negligence 25 March 2020 – 20 July 2023

YEAR	2020 (beginning 25 March)	2021	2022	2023 (ending 20 July)
RELEVANT COMPLAINTS	35	66	70	34
TOTAL COMPLAINTS	1,805	3,285	3,266	1,839

Nāku iti noa, nā



Dr Craig Goodwillie
Senior OIA Advisor