

23 December 2019

Mr Zac Fleming  
MediaWorks



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Whanganui 4540, New Zealand

Via email: [zacfleming@mediaworks.co.nz](mailto:zacfleming@mediaworks.co.nz)

Dear Mr Fleming

**Official Information Act Request – Presentation to Emergency Department with dental issues**

Under section 14 of the Official Information Act, the Whanganui District Health Board (WDHB) received a partial transfer of your request from the Ministry of Health on 22 November 2019. You requested the following information in relation to OIA dated 31 October 2019 (with the questions transferred from the Ministry of Health to the DHBs highlighted in bold):

-- *"The number of people who presented to a hospital emergency department with dental issues in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. Please itemise per year, and, where possible, per hospital.*

-- *What is the standard procedure when someone presents to the emergency department with a dental problem? Please explain standard procedure for cases where treatment is refused, and where treatment is administered."*

**Whanganui District Health Board responds as follows:**

-- ***"The number of people who presented to a hospital emergency department with dental issues in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. Please itemise per year, and, where possible, per hospital.***

Caveat: WDHB's old patient management system recorded the reason for presentation in a free format text field. The only way of determining if a presentation was dental related was to search this field for the following keywords, 'Dental', 'Teeth', 'Tooth' and to count the number of times any of these 3 criteria were present.

For the years 2018 and 2019 the numbers were taken from the new PMS using ICD10 codes which enabled a more precise query, and shows a significant increase in the numbers of dental related presentations.

This should **not be interpreted as an actual increase** in patient volume, but a more robust system allowing improved data extraction.

	A	B	C
1	COUNT	YEAR	
2	96	2014	
3	119	2015	
4	122	2016	
5	116	2017	
6	163	2018	
7	125	2019	
8			

**-- What is the standard procedure when someone presents to the emergency department with a dental problem? Please explain standard procedure for cases where treatment is refused, and where treatment is administered."**

Patients that present to the Emergency Department (ED) with dental concerns receive an assessment according to Australasian triage score, eg pain relief or antibiotics, however ED does not have a dentist working within the department.

When required patients are referred to specialist care, which may be a community dentist or for example maxio facial specialist.

Should you have any further queries about the above information, please contact our OIA co-ordinator Deanne Holden at [deanne.holden@wdhb.org.nz](mailto:deanne.holden@wdhb.org.nz)

Yours sincerely



Rowena Kui  
**Acting Chief Executive**