

19 February 2020

██████████
██████████
██████████
Via Email: ██████████

Response to a request for official information

Dear ██████

Thank you for your request for official information, as a partial transfer of Parts 1 and 2 (of 4) from the Ministry of Health and received 22 November 2019 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)¹, followed by the necessary extension of time 20 December 2019 and notice of decision 10 January 2020 for Part 2, where you seek the following information:

- 1. 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.***

NMH response

TABLE 1

Financial Year 1 Jul – 30 June	Nelson ED	Hospital	Wairau (Blenheim) Hospital ED
2014-15		307	268
2015-16		306	258
2016-17		315	210
2017-18		244	180
2018-19		273	195

- 2. 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.***

NMH response

Two Ministry of Health service specifications for District Health Boards (DHB) outline the standard treatment procedure for people who present to the Emergency Department (ED) with a dental problem:

- 1. Hospital Dental Services***
- 2. Emergency Dental Services for Low Income Adults.***

¹ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

Emergency dental services – relief of pain and infection

People presenting to ED for relief of dental pain will receive immediate assessment and advice to assist with the pain and distress. Treatment may include administration of local anaesthetic, prescription of pain relief and antibiotics.

For Eligible Service Users under the *Hospital Dental Services* specification (where a medical reason indicates that dental care is best provided within a hospital setting), and during regular business hours, the ED Registered Health Professional (RHP) will speak to a dentist and refer the person to the Hospital Dental Department. These cases are treated within a prompt timeframe depending on the advice received from the ED RHP. Alternatively, the person is advised to contact the Hospital Dental Department during regular business hours for an appointment, and the ED RHP will send a referral to the Department.

Parents or care-givers of children and young people aged under 18 years are advised to contact their regular Community Oral Health or Adolescent Oral Health provider of dental services during regular business hours for ongoing free dental care. Emergency dental services will also be provided after hours by the private on-call dentist.

Emergency dental services are also available, under the Hospital Dental Services specification, such as the assessment and management of severe orofacial infections, uncontrolled oral haemorrhage and/or orofacial trauma. The hospital on-call dentist (or the Hospital Dental Department during regular business hours) is contacted by the ED RHP so as a dental assessment, diagnosis and treatment can be provided.

If the person is not eligible for subsequent dental treatment they are provided with the telephone number of the local private on-call dentist or it is suggested they contact their own regular dentist for care. Definitive care for the dental problem is provided by a private dentist.

Emergency dental services for low income adults – relief of pain and infection

The Hospital Dental Department provides dental assessment, diagnosis and treatment, and reparative services that are immediately necessary for the relief of pain and infection for low income adults aged 18 years and over who hold a valid Community Services Card, under the *Emergency Dental Services for Low Income Adults* specification.

Eligible Service Users who need emergency dental treatment are referred to the Hospital Dental Department via the ED RHP (or may self-refer from Wairau Hospital ED).

Service Users eligible for treatment due to medical conditions e.g. as an adjunct to treatment for oral or oro-pharyngeal cancer, or urgent assessment prior to cardiac surgery will be assessed as priority patients over people referred for relief of pain due to financial reasons.

Hospital Dental Departments are expected to ensure reasonable access is readily available for eligible people in need of emergency dental care. Accordingly, Hospital Dental Department Relief of Pain appointments are scheduled on Monday and Thursday afternoons. An Urgent Treatment appointment is scheduled on each week-day, and this may also be available for Relief of Pain presentations if not required for other urgent dental treatment.

In instances where an ED referral is received by the Hospital Dental Department and the person has not contacted the Department, attempts will be made to contact the person to schedule an appointment.

This response has been provided under the Official Information Act 1982. You have the right to seek an investigation by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602.

If you have any questions about this decision please feel free to email our OIA Coordinator OIArequest@nmdhb.govt.nz I trust that this information meets your requirements. NMH, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's 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 feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P Bramley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Peter Bramley
Chief Executive

cc: Ministry of Health via email: SectorOIAs@moh.govt.nz