

10 November 2020

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for official information received 17 September 2020 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)¹, followed by the necessary extension of time 15 October 2020, where you seek information on gender affirming healthcare services.

Please see the NMH response under each of your questions below, where we have included relevant extracts, in italics, from the Gender Dysphoria section of the Nelson Marlborough *HealthPathways* website which provides guidance on community-based care and management of patients.

- 1. *Could you please advise whether the following gender-affirming healthcare services are funded by the Nelson-Marlborough District Health Board for transgender patients, and whether the services are currently available:***

A Hormone therapy

From HealthPathways

Hormone manipulation

□ Endocrine hormone manipulation is not undertaken lightly, and usually only considered for those aged >18 years

□ If 15 to 18 years, endocrine therapy may be considered on a case by case basis after psychological assessment.

□ All patients must have had a full psychological or psychiatric assessment, which may take several sessions, and a written recommendation for endocrine manipulation.

□ If a patient is accepted for hormone treatment, this will be directed by an endocrinologist or paediatrician, with appropriate monitoring by general practice.

Hormone treatment

Patients are seen in the Endocrinology clinic for assessment of hormone treatment after they have had a satisfactory psychology/psychiatry assessment to confirm that they are transgender. We initiate hormone treatment, but ongoing treatment can be prescribed by the General Practitioner (GP).

B Mastectomy

Gender affirming related service not available.

¹ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

C Hysterectomy

Gender affirming related service not available.

D Orchidectomy

Gender affirming related service not available.

E Facial hair removal

Gender affirming related service not available.

F Breast augmentation

Gender affirming related service not available.

G Voice training

Patients are seen in the Speech Therapy service for gender affirming voice training. The service offers assessment, advice and if required voice therapy. Referrals are usually received via relevant health practitioners although self-referrals are also accepted.

2. Please provide information about the process of accessing those services that are available?

Referral by GP to Independent Nursing Practise (INP) Medical Clinic, which has funding from NMH to provide psychological assessment and support for clients wishing to change gender or explore issues around this, including some psychology support through the process.

A Is an assessment by a mental health professional required in order to access gender-affirming healthcare services? If so, which services?

From HealthPathways

Psychological assessment or treatment

- Psychological assessment is a pre-requisite for anyone seeking endocrine therapy or surgery.
- Psychological therapy should ideally be provided by a psychologist with appropriate experience in gender dysphoria.
- A limited number of funded psychological packages of care are available locally for young people up to and including age 21 years. These must be pre-approved by INP Medical Clinic.
- Otherwise, psychological assessment and treatment is only available from a private provider.
- Send a detailed medical and mental health history with all referrals.

DHB comment: Psychological treatment may be all that is needed.

Pre-puberty

- Refer to a paediatrician via Child Health Services for case management, family support, and coordination of medical and psychological care.
- Refer directly to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) if serious mental health issues that meet service criteria.

From puberty to age 21

- Refer to INP Medical Clinic or to a GP with special interest for funded 1 hour transgender assessment and ongoing support.

For funded psychological package of care, fax request to INP Medical Clinic (03) 546-8154, attention Annette Milligan. Funding is limited, and referral does not guarantee availability.

Aged 22 or older

Refer to private psychologist with an interest in gender dysphoria. This is a requirement before any public or private endocrinology referral. PHMI funding may be accessed (Marlborough patients only) for some sessions.

For private endocrinology service, refer to Dr John Wilson, Tasman Endocrinology, 349 – 355 Lower Queen Street, Richmond, (021 827 007).

B In the case of hormone therapy, can primary health providers prescribe hormones, or does this have to be initially approved by an endocrinologist?

Hormone therapy is initially prescribed by a specialist (Endocrinologist or Paediatrician), then followed up by a GP.

C Is any period of real life experience required to access surgery?

Not Applicable– surgery is not provided at NMH.

3. Please advise what the process is if transgender patients require one of the above services, but the DHB does not offer this service?

From HealthPathways

Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS)

Gender Reassignment Surgery is not funded by the Nelson Marlborough DHB, but there are a small number of gender reassignment surgeries (GRS) funded privately through the Ministry of Health High Cost Treatment Pool.

Only male to female surgery is performed.

Referrals can only be made by an endocrinologist.

Female to male "bottom" surgery can be obtained through private overseas facilities at the individual's cost.

B Does the DHB currently fund patients to travel to other areas to access this healthcare?

No.

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



Dr Peter Bramley
Chief Executive