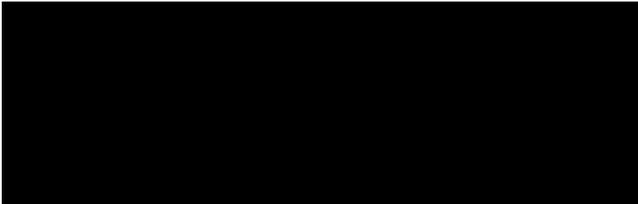


14 June 2022



Re: Official Information Request – GP Referrals for Psychiatric Evaluation Auckland DHB Ref: 20220518-1226

I refer to your official information request dated 18 May 2022, seeking the following information:

Can you please let me know the number of how many referrals made by GPs in Auckland for publicly funded psychiatric evaluation through the Auckland DHB were denied and approved by the Auckland DHB from 2012 to 2022.

Response

We are unable to provide the information requested as it would require the review of individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files from 2012 -2022 and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

However please see the data below, which is a count of those who have been referred but who were not seen. This group includes those who did not meet criteria for acceptance into the service, and also includes those who chose not to proceed with the referral, and also those who were offered an appointment and did not attend.

The numbers in the following table are the numbers of people referred by GPs for publicly funded psychiatric evaluation. The first row of numbers are people who, while referred, were not seen for an evaluation. We do not use the term denied because this is not accurate. See our notes 4a-d below.

The second row are the numbers of people referred who were seen face-to-face.

F2F* Gp	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022**
Not seen	185	160	42	45	58	84	76	73	43	35	19
Seen F2F	445	543	630	827	830	936	952	960	1100	1182	387

*F2F Gp means face-to-face group.

**Based on referrals received between 1 January 2012 and 30 April 2022. Therefore, 2022 only covers four months.

Note:

1. These are referrals received into Auckland DHB Mental Health & Addiction Services with a referral source of a General Practitioner.
2. Our preferred approach is to split referrals into those seen or not seen for at least one face-to-face appointment (including Zoom sessions if available)
3. A face-to-face appointment usually signals the start of engagement with a service (and is thus a signal of a referral being accepted)
4. An absence of any face-to-face contacts is not necessarily entirely attributable to a referral being declined. The other reasons for this could be:
 - a. A decision by the referred person/family not to proceed with the referral.
 - b. Withdrawal of the referral by the referrer.
 - c. A reluctance by the referred person/family to engage with the service. These could be due, for example, to difficulties establishing and maintaining contact and/or failing to attend arranged appointment(s).
 - d. A clinically informed decision, taken after reviewing the referral, to manage it without face-to-face contact but to use alternative methods or to refer elsewhere.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michael Shepherd
Acting Chief Executive