



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, Wellington 6011, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140 • Telephone: 0-4-916 3300 • Facsimile: 0-4-918 0099

12 JUL 2013

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email of 11 June 2013 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information relating to assessing entitlement for a medical-related benefit.

As you have asked a number of questions, I will address each in turn for the sake of clarity.

Question 1

The Ministry does not centrally record the number of benefit applications and recipients that have been referred to a designated doctor that have not subsequently been endorsed by a designated doctor. Rather this information is held on individual client files. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. This section allows me to refuse a request where substantial collation and research is required to find the information requested. In this case, to research the number of beneficiaries whose benefit type has not been endorsed by a designated doctor, the Ministry would need to manually access and collate thousands of individual client files. I do not consider this to be in the public interest as this would remove staff from their core duties and impact on the effective functioning of the Ministry.

Please note that the current business practices of Work and Income do not require the referrals to designated doctors to be held at a national level, rather information is held on individual client files where it is most needed.

Questions 2 to 7

The Medical Appeals Board reviews all information available to them about a client's medical condition and/or disability and his or her capacity to work when a client seeks a right of appeal on medical grounds under section 53A of the Social Security Act 1964.

The Medical Appeals Board must decide whether the appellant meets the medical criteria or work capacity criteria for the relevant benefit and considers whether the right decision was made to decline or cancel the benefit.

It is not the role of the Medical Appeals Board to diagnose, treat or manage a client's health condition and/or disability. Rather, it is an independent body established to ensure that correct and fair decisions are made within the legislation.

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Please find attached summary information about Medical Appeals Board data for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 April 2013. This information was released to the National Beneficiaries Advocacy Consultative Group in June 2013.

Currently, this is the only national level Medical Appeals Board information that is available until the Ministry has completed a review of the way that it records Medical Appeals Board data. The review is expected to be completed later this year.

Questions 8 to 10

A programme of designated doctor training took place in August to October 2008 across New Zealand. A range of materials were used in this training. They are listed below and are enclosed for your reference.

- *Designated Doctor Workshops*
- *Medical Certificate for Sickness and Invalid's Benefit and Independent Youth Benefit (Sickness)*
- *Referral for a Designated Doctor Assessment*
- *Designated Doctor Report*
- *Host Doctor/Usual Practitioner Report*
- *Scenario 1 Designated Doctor Referral - Indicated by GP on the medical certificate*
- *Scenario 2 Designated Doctor Referral - Unable to determine entitlement from available information*
- *Scenario 3 Designated Doctor Referral - Duration exceeds entitlement for this condition*
- *Scenario 4 Designated Doctor Referral - Engaged in activities that appear to be at odds with recorded incapacities*
- *Scenario 5 - Designated Doctor Referral - A previous medical certificate contains substantially different diagnosis or recommendations*
- *Scenario 6 Designated Doctor Referral - Diagnosis unclear*
- *Scenario 7 Designated Doctor Referral - Conflicting information on the medical certificate*

In addition, all doctors have access to the Guide for Designated Doctors which is available on the Work and Income website at:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/community/health-and-disability-practitioners/guide-for-designated-doctors/.

I am withholding the copies of all reports that were prepared as part of the Designated Doctor training under section 18(f) of the Act as it was part of the wider Working New Zealand training package that the Ministry developed between 2006 to 2008.

To collate this information would require staff to search through a large amount of documents to collate and assess the specific documents that are within the scope of your request. I do not consider this would be an appropriate use of staff time and resources.

In addition, please note that the Ministry no longer holds the complete list(s) (including places, regions, times and dates) of all "training sessions" held all over New Zealand, for the purpose of training medical practitioners or other health professionals. As such this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information is not available.

Question 11

I am withholding the salaries of the Principal Health Advisor and Principal Disability Advisor, and Senior Advisor under section 9(2)(a) to protect their privacy. In this

instance I believe the need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs the public interest in this information.

Question 12

I can advise that there are 21 Work and Income staff who are currently employed as Regional Health Advisors and Regional Disability Advisors.

Northland region	
Regional Disability Advisor	Ken Rostern
Regional Health Advisor	Marie Louise Waugh
Auckland region	
Regional Disability Advisor	Vaughn Dodd Christine Adamson Jaqueline Abel
Regional Health Advisor	Mary Mojel Janette Cahill Britt Doodes
Waikato region	
Regional Disability Advisor	Sue Bristow
Regional Health Advisor	Manujon Pemerika
Bay of Plenty	
Regional Disability Advisor	Sue Dyson
Regional Health Advisor	Jennifer Raphael
East Coast	
Regional Disability Advisor	Lynne Benefield
Regional Health Advisor	Kelvin Stephens
Central	
Regional Disability Advisor	Haley Savage
Regional Health Advisor	Tracey Daysh
Wellington	
Regional Disability Advisor	Brenda Keating
Regional Health Advisor	Annette Bridgen
Canterbury	
Regional Disability Advisor	Monique Newman
Regional Health Advisor	Heather Harding
Southland	
Regional Disability Advisor	Tanya Rissman

The table below provides the qualifications held by these staff. Please note that staff may hold more than one qualification.

Qualification Type	Number of staff
Registered Nurse including: Advanced Diploma of Master of Nursing; MidWife; Community Health; Registered Psychiatric Nurse; Masters of Health Science (Endorsed Nursing)	14
Adult Teaching-related qualifications: Post Graduate Teaching papers; Certificate in Adult Teaching; Post Graduate Dip in career development; Graduate Certificate in clinical teaching	7
Rehabilitation-related qualifications: Post Graduate Dip Rehabilitation Studies; Post Graduate Certificate in Rehabilitation.	2
Psychology-related qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Major in Psychology); Bachelor of Science (Psychology).	5
Social Work	3
Other Health-related qualifications: Supervision in Health Sciences Certificate; Certificate in Quality Health Care; Certificate in Hauora Maori (Maori Health); Post Graduate Certificate in Health Science (Maori Health); Post Graduate Dip Health Science; Post Graduate Certificate Applied Behavioural Analysis; Certificate Interactive Drawing Therapy; Certificate Health Promotion; Bachelor of Applied Science and Environmental Health; National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety; Certificate in Mental Health; Diploma of Sport and Recreation; Bachelor Therapeutic Recreation.	9
National Certificate in Employment Support	2
Other qualifications held: MA Social Policy; BA Social Sciences; Master of Business Administration (MBA); Certificate Small Business Management; Bachelor of Education; Child Care & Protections Certificate; Bachelor of Business (Major in Human Resource Management); Post Graduate Certificate in Public Policy.	8

I am withholding the specific qualification of each staff member to protect their privacy under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act. I consider the public interest is met in the information that is being provided to you.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Debbie Power
Deputy Chief Executive Work and Income

Medical Appeal Summary Statistics

From 1 July 2012 to the end of April 2013:

- 490 medical appeals were received. Of these:
- 90 are in the process of being reviewed internally or are waiting for a medical appeal hearing to be scheduled, and
- 400 have been completed.

Completed medical appeals

Of the 400 completed:

- 68 (17%) were withdrawn
- 41 (10%) were overturned following an internal review, and
- 291 (73%) were formally heard by a medical appeal board.

Appeal board outcome

Of the 291 appeals formally heard by a medical appeal board:

- 215 (74%) were upheld, and
- 76 (26%) were overturned.

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-182
WELLINGTON 6142

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Ombudsman
Deputy Ombudsman for Work and Income