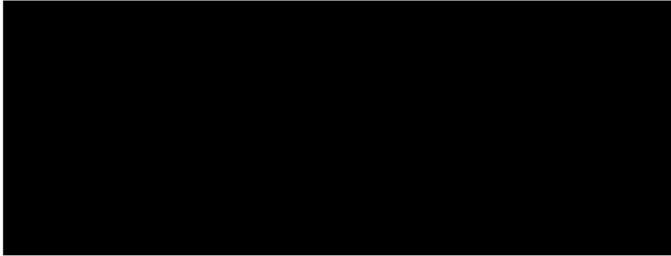


05 AUG 2019



Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 2 July 2019. I understand that you have difficulty interacting with health organisations for receiving postal mail at a different address from your residential address.

My response to your questions regarding postal address policies used by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) are as follows:

1. What policies does MoH have regarding postal addresses?

The Health Information Standards Organisation Consumer Health Identity Standard (HISO 10046) describes the data elements that should be used to capture and store patient address details for the health and disability sector. This document is publicly available to download at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/hiso-10046-consumer-health-identity-standard>

The Ministry has also published the Identity-National Health Index (NHI) User Reference Information & Best Practice Advice. This document provides guidance for maintaining address details in the NHI and is publicly available at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/identity-nhi-user-reference-information-best-practice-advice-sep16.pdf>

2. When are postal addresses allowed and not allowed to be used?

3. What registers of addresses does MoH hold and do that's addresses support postal addresses?

In response to questions 2 and 3, the NHI is the primary national register for patient demographics and addresses and it can support multiple addresses for a patient. The primary address that is recorded should be a patient's usual residential address. A separate postal address may be recorded as well if they prefer to be contacted at an address other than their residential address. It is important to note that many sector systems, particularly older systems, have limitations regarding the number of addresses they support and their interactions with the NHI for maintaining address details.

4. What processes are available to check and correct address information with these registers?

Schedule 2 of the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 lists the health providers that are allowed to access information in the NHI. All authorised providers must comply with the provisions of the Health Information Privacy Code and the Privacy Act 1993 when accessing

and updating information in the NHI. The Ministry monitors and audits the actions of health provider use of the NHI, and is responsible for assigning appropriate permissions. Some health providers have limited access to just view information, while others are able to update information on the NHI.

It is the responsibility of all providers interacting with the NHI to maintain the currency, accuracy, and completeness of address details. They will generally do this each time a patient presents for a health service and find that the identity information has changed. They will contact the Ministry for assistance with any data issues they cannot correct themselves.

Currently, only district health boards and general practitioners have the ability to directly update NHI address details. In the long term it is the Ministry's intention to enable people to verify and update their own address details, but significant work is required to safely enable this capability.

5. What percentage of people on these registers have a recorded postal address?

Of the total population of NHIs enrolled with a Primary Healthcare Organisation (PHO):

- 82% have postal/physical address
- 6% have a physical only address
- 10% have a postal only address (including the Rural Delivery, PO Box, and Counter Delivery addresses)
- 0.5% of the total are PO Box or Counter Delivery addresses.

The remaining addresses cannot be validated by our address validation service.

6. How does address information get shared between health providers?

Sharing of address information between the NHI and health providers is primarily achieved using Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). In specific cases, address details may also be shared with providers using bulk file extracts. On average there are approximately 1 million NHI retrieval transactions per business day.

7. What policies exist for sharing address information between health providers?

There is no specific policy for sharing address details between providers, however there are several relevant Web Service Integration Design Principles:

- a. the NHI is the master source of identity information in the health sector for patients
- b. integrating systems should use the NHI to obtain and confirm national identifiers to support identity functions within their systems
- c. the NHI should be updated first before integrating systems which should then synchronise with the updated master data source
- d. all NHI data should be retrieved via the provided API services in a just-in-time (JIT) manner when the data is used
- e. any data retrieved from the NHI should be considered potentially out of date as soon as it is retrieved
- f. integrating systems are responsible for initiating any synchronisation of data held by the NHI. The integrating system is responsible for the persistence of the synchronisation state should this be required.

8. What other documents does MoH hold regarding postal addresses?

The Ministry does not hold any other documents regarding postal addresses. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

I trust that this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Shayne Hunter
Deputy Director-General
Data and Digital