

Our reference: FOI20/51

Dear [REDACTED]

### DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION

I refer to your rescoped application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act) received by Canberra Health Services (CHS) on Wednesday 11 November 2020.

This application requested access to:

*"Please provide the following figures for the last 5 financial years (if this is not possible please provide figures for the last 4 financial years; if this is not possible please provide figures for the last 3 financial years; if this is not possible please provide figures for the last 2 financial years; if this is not possible please provide figures for the last financial year. If you are not able to provide financial years, please provide calendar years):*

- *The total number of GP referrals RECEIVED by Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals RECEIVED by the University of Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals REJECTED by Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals REJECTED by the University of Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics RECEIVED by Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics RECEIVED by the University of Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics REJECTED by Canberra Hospital.*
- *The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics REJECTED by the University of Canberra Hospital."*

*Specialist referral data only is fine (i.e. not pathology or imaging) and by referrals being rejected, I mean GP referrals that are sent to Canberra Hospital or University of Canberra Hospital, but not progressed or do not eventuate in a specialist appointment (for example, a referral is assessed and sent back to a GP for primary health management of injury/illness)."*

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of CHS under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. As agreed by you on 8 December, CHS was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Thursday 24 December 2020**.

I have extracted information into a document holding the information within the scope of your access application. This is outlined in the schedule of documents included at [Attachment A](#) to this decision letter.

This document was created for the purpose of your request and captures information from a number of systems across the CHS network that are used for the management of reporting referrals. The University of Canberra Hospital (UCH) is managed within CHS. The large majority of referrals are managed directly by CHS central outpatients and are then allocated to the respective services for either their treatment or appointment with a clinician. UCH is not set up to receive referrals directly from a General Practitioner. Therefore, the provided figures are a consolidated snapshot of both The Canberra Hospital and UCH statistics for a period of 2015 to 2020.

As noted in the footnote of the document, the data between years is not directly comparable as the system currently used to track referrals does not facilitate reporting of earlier referral status e.g. a referral may be listed as returned in 2018 for further information but then will be changed to active when that information is received. In addition, changes to improve effectiveness of the system has meant different application of business rules over time. Due to system configuration constraints, the Canberra Health Services (CHS) Clinical Portal system used for referral management does not reliably allow for reporting on why a referral was specifically 'rejected' or cancelled. As such, the figures that have been provided are based on all cancellations. Specific reasons why a referral is rejected are as follows:

- Uploaded to a speciality that do not use Clinical Portal for referral management
- The patient was uncontactable
- The referral did not contain enough information
- The patient does not meet the eligibility criteria to access the service. For example in orthopaedics if the person is referred for potential joint replacement surgery but does not yet meet the criteria, or has not yet participated in physiotherapy for e.g. they may be deemed not yet suitable for surgery and their referral will not be accepted
- The service has rejected the referral due to either clinical or administrative reasons
- Duplicate referral
- Patient no longer wishes to access the service
- Referral registered in error (for e.g. registered as new instead of an update).

### **Decisions**

I have decided to grant full access to the relevant document. The document released to you is provided at [Attachment B](#) to this letter.

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- The FOI Act;
- The contents of the documents that fall within the scope of your request; and
- The *Human Rights Act 2004*.

### **Charges**

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

### **Disclosure Log**

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CHS maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and document released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

### **Ombudsman review**

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman  
GPO Box 442  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Via email: [ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [ombudsman.act.gov.au](http://ombudsman.act.gov.au)

### **ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review**

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal  
Level 4, 1 Moore St  
GPO Box 370  
Canberra City ACT 2601  
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740  
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

### **Further assistance**

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email [HealthFOI@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthFOI@act.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Andrew Gay  
**Chief Financial Officer**  
Canberra Health Services

 December 2020

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Please be aware that under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, some of the information provided to you will be released to the public through the ACT Government's Open Access Scheme. The Open Access release status column of the table below indicates what documents are intended for release online through open access.

Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available under this policy. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform the contact officer immediately.

Information about what is published on open access is available online at: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/public-information/consumers/freedom-information>

APPLICANT NAME	WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	FILE NUMBER
	<p><i>"Please provide the following figures for the last 5 financial years (if this is not possible please provide figures for the last 4 financial years; if this is not possible please provide figures for the last 3 financial years; if this is not possible please provide figures for the last 2 financial years; if this is not possible please provide figures for the last financial year. If you are not able to provide financial years, please provide calendar years):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals RECEIVED by Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals RECEIVED by the University of Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals REJECTED by Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals REJECTED by the University of Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics RECEIVED by Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics RECEIVED by the University of Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics REJECTED by Canberra Hospital.</i></li> <li><i>• The total number of GP referrals for Orthopaedics REJECTED by the University of Canberra Hospital.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Specialist referral data only is fine (i.e. not pathology or imaging) and by referrals being rejected, I mean GP referrals that are sent to Canberra Hospital or University of Canberra Hospital, but not progressed or do not eventuate in a specialist appointment (for example, a referral is assessed and sent back to a GP for primary health management of injury/illness)."</i></p>	FOI20/51

Ref Number	Page Number	Description	Date	Status Decision	Factor	Open Access release status
1.	1	Table- All Specialties and Orthopaedics referrals received and referrals cancelled	2015-2020	Full release		Yes
<b>Total Number of Documents</b>						
<b>1.</b>						



<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>All specialties</b>		<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	36414	Referrals received:	2507
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	11294	*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	574
<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>All specialties</b>		<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	39293	Referrals received:	3336
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	14575	*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	1927
<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>All specialties</b>		<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	32603	Referrals received:	2188
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	9369	*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	1029
<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>All specialties</b>		<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	38054	Referrals received:	2458
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	9021	*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	1055
<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>All specialties</b>		<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	48388	Referrals received:	2532
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	7996	*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	581
<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2020 YTD</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>2020 YTD</b>
<b>All specialties</b>	47052	<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	5501	Referrals received:	2520
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:		*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	702
<b>Date range:</b>	<b>01/01/2015 – 08/12/2020</b>	<b>Date range:</b>	<b>01/01/2015 – 08/12/2020</b>
<b>All specialties</b>		<b>Orthopaedics</b>	
Referrals received:	241804	Referrals received:	15541
*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	57756	*Referrals Cancelled/Returned:	5868

**\*Footnote:** Data between years are not directly comparable as the system currently used to track referrals does not facilitate reporting of earlier referral status e.g. a referral may be listed as returned in 2018 for further information but then will be changed to active when that information is received. In addition changes to improve effectiveness of the system has meant different application of business rules over time. Due to system configuration constraints, the Canberra Health Services (CHS) Clinical Portal system used for referral management does not reliably allow for reporting on why a referral was specifically 'rejected' or cancelled. As such, the figures that have been provided are based on all cancellations. Specific reasons why a referral is rejected are as follows:

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