



15 December 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 21 August 2025, requesting information about registered medical practitioners and nurses employed by MSD.

I apologise for the delay in responding to your request, the information you requested required substantial consultation and the time this has taken to finalise your response is regrettable.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please see my response to your questions below.

1. *The names, positions, and registration numbers of all registered medical practitioners currently employed by or contracted to MSD in any capacity.*
2. *The names, positions, and registration numbers of all registered nurses currently employed by or contracted to MSD in any capacity.*
3. *The job descriptions or role descriptions for each medical practitioner and nurse identified above.*
4. *The salary bands or remuneration ranges for each position identified above. For contractors, please provide the hourly or daily rates paid.*
5. *The total annual cost to MSD for medical and nursing staff, broken down by:*
 - *Salaries for permanent employees*
 - *Contractor payments*
 - *Any additional allowances or benefits*

The Ministry does not require all staff to disclose if they are registered medical practitioners or registered nurses. However, I can advise that the Ministry has one position that requires a medical qualification, a Principal Health Advisor (PHA) who is a practicing clinician. This role provides support and leadership for the Regional Health and Disability teams.

I understand you have already been in correspondence with the current PHA and are aware that Dr Cathy Stephenson holds this position. The salary band and remuneration range for this role is SM3 with a range of \$198,140 to \$262,278.

I am refusing your request for the total annual cost to the Ministry for the PHA salary and the PHA registration number under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order

to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of this individual outweighs any public interest in this information.

- 6. The reporting structure showing which non-medical staff have authority to override or influence decisions made by these medical professionals.*
- 7. Any policies, protocols, or guidelines that govern how medical professionals at MSD interact with case management decisions, particularly regarding Disability Allowance applications and medication assessments.*

The PHA role provides support and leadership for the Regional Health and Disability teams. These teams are located around the motū, and their role is to provide knowledge and guidance to frontline staff, when they are working with clients with health conditions and disabilities. They do not make decisions on eligibility for benefits such as Disability Allowance or additional supports – this is the role of our frontline staff or Case Managers who make the final decision based on the client's personal circumstances and whether they meet the eligibility criteria. The Regional Health and Disability advisors come from a variety of backgrounds, with many having worked either as health practitioners, or having worked in the disability sector.

Of note, the Ministry has a second opinion pathway which can be utilised when clients or practitioners are seeking an alternative opinion around work capacity or entitlement to supports for clients with health conditions or disabilities. This pathway utilises practitioners known as Designated Health Practitioners to provide the second opinion – these practitioners can be medical practitioners, nurse practitioners or psychologists. They are not employed by the Ministry, and are not contractors, but their time is reimbursed at an agreed rate. For more information on this pathway, please visit here [Second opinions and designated health practitioners - Work and Income](#)

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Again, apologies for the delay in this instance.

Ngā mihi nui



Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services