

4 February 2016

Kia ora koutou,

Transgender Healthcare in General Practice and NHIs

As a GP on the Northern Regional Transgender Health Services Review Group, I have been asked several times about the process of acknowledging transitioning gender identity in the patient register, and how this would impact on the NHI.

I have learned that some primary care teams are already up to date on this, but many teams are confused. Please take the time to check your team's processes respect self-identified gender.

1. Statistics NZ leads the standardization of demographic data collection across sectors to include all Genders, based on Human Rights.
'Gender Diverse', 'Female' and 'Male' are the gender terms to be used when collecting gender information.
http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/media-centre/additional-releases/gender-identity-17-july-15.aspx
In the Health and Disability sector, both self-identified Gender and biological Sex are important. Please follow this link <http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/classifications-and-standards/classification-related-stats-standards/gender-identity.aspx> to open the pdf "Statistical standard for gender identity" for Operational Issues including Gender Identity changing over time.
2. Gender identity is self-determined.
A change in documented gender identity such as on the patient register or NHI, does not need any identity documentation.
The NHI is also used by dentists and occupational therapists. The NHI will be expanded to the health records maintained by other health professionals also.
A patient's preference to change their gender on the patient register should be respected, and followed up with a phone call to NHI 0800 855 151 so that the indexed gender is updated.
The potential negative impact of next-of-kin selecting gender identity by proxy should be considered carefully.
It is expected that generally, **teenagers can self-define their gender.**
Patient Information Management Software will be updated to align with statistical standards to acknowledge both Gender and Sex.
3. Sex will be classified as either 'Female' or 'Male' <http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/classifications-and-standards/classification-related-stats-standards/sex.aspx>
Sex reassignment occurs where a person has undergone the necessary treatment to permanently change their sex.
A person who has undergone sex reassignment should be classified to that sex.
Someone who is currently undergoing such procedures (with permanent outcomes), and living as the sex that they are taking steps towards, would be classified as that sex.
If a person's sex is Indeterminate at birth, sex assignment occurs when they undergo treatment to become male or female.
A person who was of indeterminate sex and who has undergone sex assignment should be classified to that sex.

4. Every health consumer should have only one NHI number.
- 4a. The NHI number is linked to demographic details including self-identified gender (not biological sex), as per The Consumer Health Identity Interim Standard from Dec2013 Section 2.4 of <https://healthitboard.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/10046-consumer-health-identity-standard-v1.pdf>
- Currently gender options on the National Health Index are M, F, Indeterminate, and Unknown. As Indeterminate is a biological Sex term, and not a Gender term, Indeterminate sex is limited to perinatal use.
- 4b. If your patient has multiple NHI numbers please contact Sector Services on 0800 855 151 and they will investigate the numbers and request a merge of any duplicate information. Merges occur every evening. Usually the first NHI number assigned to a person is kept as the master NHI number, and the other NHI number/s are linked as secondary NHI numbers. Identity details that are changed are not deleted but are kept as historical data.
- 4c. Currently a change in gender on the National Health Index would be recorded as Eg. 22/02/2000 M, 13/03/2015 F.
- The MoH has confirmed that the next software step towards acknowledging gender diversity will move NHI gender options from (M, F, U) to (M, F, U, O), the O being a 'Gender Diverse' umbrella identity eg. 17/04/2003 F, 18/04/2017 O.
- The MoH recognizes that ideally we will move towards systems recording the actual text of a person's response for self-identified information, including but not limited to whakawahine, transwoman, woman.

I hope this is helpful. Any NHI questions please call NHI 0800 855 151

Best of Health to You

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