



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

- 3 FEB 2017

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Dear Privacy of another: section 9(2)(a)

On 17 January 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *A copy of the following document - "Guide for Medical Practitioners - Disability Allowance"*
- *A current list of titles of guidance documents provided for medical practitioners.*

The Ministry depends on assessments from doctors, nurse practitioners, midwives and dentists to help determine whether people are eligible for health related financial assistance. A qualified medical practitioner provides information in the form of a medical certificate which allows Work and Income to determine whether the conditions are met for health and disability related benefits. Any statement a doctor certifies must be honest and made in good faith. Medical practitioners are required to be qualified within their field of practice, and registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand or equivalent body.

Your request for the 'Guide for Medical Practitioners - Disability Allowance' is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act, as this document does not exist.

The Ministry does not supply medical practitioners with guidance documents or a list of guidance documents available. However, there is information available for medical practitioners on the Ministry website. Additionally, medical practitioners can contact their local Health and Disability team at their nearest Work and Income regional office on 0800 559 009 for further advice, if required.

You may be interested in the following publications and resources for health and disability practitioners, including Child Disability Allowance information, which is publically available online at:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/health-and-disability-practitioners/publications-and-forms.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/health-and-disability-practitioners/publications-and-forms.html)
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/health-and-disability-practitioners/guides/child-disability-allowance.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/health-and-disability-practitioners/guides/child-disability-allowance.html)

Work and Income have established a panel of respected medical practitioners, known as 'designated doctors', to provide second opinions on medical information. The provision of a second opinion assists Work and Income to determine a person's capacity for work and entitlement to financial assistance. It also assists with helping people to move towards employment. Further information regarding designated doctors is available online at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/health-and-disability-practitioners/designated-doctors.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/health-and-disability-practitioners/designated-doctors.html)

There is a guide for designated doctors, however, the status of the guide is that it is currently being updated and a refreshed guide will be available once this has occurred. As such, the guide for designated doctors is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act, as it is under active consideration. The release of this information is likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding guides of medical practitioners, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



PP Elisabeth Brunt  
**General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services**