

19 July 2022

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Reconsidered Response to Question 4 of your request for official information

We refer to our attached Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)¹ response 27 May 2022 to your request for official information (attached), you ask us to reconsider Question 4 of your request:

Q4 "Of any hospitalised children with the Omicron variant of Covid 19 how many have no other previous serious health issues."

"As this refusal relates to substantial collation and research as stated in section 18(f) of the Act can you please provide information as to the time it will take to go through 32 patient files and also the cost in resources of going through these files?"

It appears that the information of 6524 children contracting Covid is at your fingertips, but concrete evidence in support of the public media release by Dr Nick Baker that children are at risk of serious risk of hospitalization after contracting Covid 19 is not.

It defies belief that no attempt has been made to record and confirm the direct information held in these files justifying the Chief Medical Officers media statement.

How can the public be assured that this media statement is a true account if current or previous health issues of these children are not taken into account and made public?

I do not believe that in this case the NMBHB supports the open disclosure of information as this is a reasonable request to examine the files of 32 children to provide transparency to the public.

I ask that you reconsider your refusal to provide the information as requested in my point no.4."

Reconsideration of Question 4

In reconsideration of Question 4 of your request, we find that research of individual patient files to meet this part of your request would prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services. It would take critical frontline staff away from their clinical work during a time when clinicians, managers and staff are concentrating on COVID-19 contingency measures for the Nelson Marlborough district.

With the increase in patients admitted with COVID-19 alongside Influenza infections during 2022, and reduction in staff due to staff sickness with the same viruses, there is no capacity, from a clinical perspective, to spend the time reviewing patient files. We must focus our resources on meeting the immediate health needs of people.

¹ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

Test of reasonableness – what was reasonable for us to respond to a year or two ago, is not the same in extraordinary time

The guidance from the Chief Ombudsman encourages agencies to use the mechanisms allowed for in the legislation. For example, in extending timeframes, a test of reasonableness is applied.

We considered whether charging would assist us in managing this work and have determined that it would not. Due to the impact of completing this work alongside hospital operational priorities we would need other personnel to review the information, and there are shortages of additional personnel, with expertise to do this work, available for employment throughout New Zealand.

Te Whatu Ora – Nelson Marlborough Reconsidered Response to Question 4

This information requested is not held in a form that is readily retrievable from our Information Systems. It is not reasonable, in the circumstances, to commit the resources required to respond to your request at this time. It would take a significant amount of time to manually go through individual patient files and under section 18(f) *‘the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research’*.

Updated COVID-19 information is on the Ministry of Health’s website at: www.health.govt.nz. Further information detailing all of government’s approach can also be found here: <https://covid19.govt.nz>.

This reconsidered response to Question 4 has been provided under the Official Information Act 1982. You have the right to seek an investigation by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602. If you have any questions about this decision please feel free to email our OIA Coordinator OIArequest@nmdhb.govt.nz

Te Whatu Ora – Nelson Marlborough, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public’s understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider.

Ngā mihi



Lexie O’Shea
Interim District Director
Nelson Marlborough

27 May 2022

Response to a request for official information

Dear 

Thank you for your request for official information received 19 April 2022 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)², where you seek the following information.

“Dr Nick Baker has stated in the media that it is important for children to be vaccinated with the Pfizer Vaccination to prevent any serious illness

- 1. Does the Pfizer vaccination given to children prevent the child from catching the Omicron variant of Covid 19.*

NMH response:

A child given the Pfizer vaccine at this time is less likely to be infected by the COVID-19 virus because the vaccine improves the child's immune response to a COVID-19 infection.

Secondly, if the vaccinated child does get infected by COVID-19, the chances of severe illness are greatly reduced because the increased immune response reduces the virus's ability to cause symptoms and illness.

The third benefit of vaccination is the child will be less likely to spread infection on to other children or adults.

- 2. How many children in the NMDHB have been infected with the Omicron variant of Covid 19.*

NMH response:

6,524 Children aged under 16 have been infected with COVID-19 since 1 January 2022 to 9 May 2022.

- 3. Of the children infected with the Omicron variant of Covid 19 how many have been hospitalised in the NMDHB.*

NMH response:

32 Children aged under 16, who presented to the Emergency Department for more than 3 hours or were Inpatient admissions, have been clinically coded with COVID-19 since 1 January 2022 to 9 May 2022.

² Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

4. Of any hospitalised children with the Omicron variant of Covid 19 how many have no other previous serious health issues.”

NMH response:

The above information is not held in a form that is readily retrievable from our systems. As such, NMH declines to respond under section 18(f) *‘the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation and research’*. It would take a significant amount of time and resources to manually go through individual patient files.

This response has been provided under the Official Information Act 1982. You have the right to seek an investigation by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602. If you have any questions about this decision please feel free to email our OIA Coordinator OIArequest@nmdhb.govt.nz

I trust this information meets your requirements. NMH, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public’s understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider.

Yours sincerely



Lexie O'Shea
Chief Executive