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9(2)(a)

RE Official information request CDHB 10485

I refer to your email dated 29 October 2020 to the Ministry of Health, and subsequently partially transferred to us on 18 November 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB – which was further clarified on 20 November 2020. Specifically:

- ***Has any evidence of that viral strain been forensically checked for, on the 3 vessels involved and were any of the cargos transporting frozen foodstuffs, fluids, chemicals, or containing medical supplies?***

Clarification (received 20 November 2020):

- ***I would welcome all information for all seamen, from all 3 vessels, presuming this meant all hotels. The OIA was answered, apart from the second part of this request that pertains to strain detection on the vessels. So once again, I would be requesting all information for all 3 vessels, which those who were isolated in respect to.***

The response you have already received from the Ministry of Health listed the SARS-CoV-2 strains isolated from the cohort of mariners from Russia and Ukraine who were quarantined in Christchurch earlier this year.

There has been no forensic investigation in relation to these SARS-CoV-2 strains on any vessels. The reason for this is that this group of mariners did not arrive into New Zealand by sea. They arrived in Christchurch on a charter flight from Russia via Singapore and went straight into a managed isolation hotel. When the mariners were eventually released from managed isolation they then travelled to their vessels in Lyttelton and Nelson. The three vessels which they then boarded to commence work are all fishing boats and there was no cargo of any sort on board.

I trust this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R La Salle', is positioned above the typed name.

Ralph La Salle
Acting Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support