

Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

CORPORATE OFFICE

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9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act request CDHB 10209

I refer to your email, dated 15 October 2019, sent to the Ministry of Health and subsequently transferred to us on 22 October 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB.

- 1. How many DHB health workers have contracted vaccine-preventable illnesses such as measles, whooping cough or flu while employed by DHBs in the past decade?**
- 2. Whether those workers had been vaccinated.**
- 3. How many patients, if any, have contracted vaccine-preventable illnesses from health workers or other patients while in hospital in the past decade?**

While there is the potential to draw specific data from various electronic databases and through clinical records review if we knew which particular conditions were of interest, the number of vaccine preventable conditions and potential cases makes this a very big task and would involve substantial collation and research. A second step would then be to determine which ones were potentially healthcare associated (the source is also not always clear). The resource requirements for this would be significant in terms of time and manpower especially to go back a decade. We are therefore declining to provide this information under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act.

In terms of Influenza, during annual epidemics there are generally small numbers of inpatients who develop influenza whilst in hospital. Most often this is occurs because they have been in contact with other patients who have not yet been diagnosed. It is also possible that these patients acquire influenza from visitors despite advice that people with influenza like symptoms should avoid visiting hospital. To the best of our knowledge, staff to patient transmission of influenza is uncommon at Canterbury DHB.

In relation to the measles outbreak in February 2019 in Canterbury, we know that one patient acquired measles whilst an inpatient. The source was likely to be another admitted patient who was discharged before the rash developed. Two health care workers likely acquired measles from the patient.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

You may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek a review of our decision to withhold information by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz; or Freephone 0800 802 602.

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 'Melissa Macfarlane', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melissa Macfarlane
Acting Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support