



1 December 2021



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Sentinel events during maternity care

Thank you for your Official Information Act request transferred to us by the Ministry of Health on 28 October seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about sentinel events during pregnancy or child birth over the past five years.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,600 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

- 1. How many sentinel events during treatment resulting in the death of a baby in utero, or within the first month of birth have been notified to the Director General of Health, along with how many serious events that resulted in major permanent loss of function (aka disability) in a child at or about the time of birth?**

District health boards do not report these events directly to the Director General of Health. Adverse events are reported to the Health Quality & Safety Commission (HQSC) via an annual report. The number of sentinel events resulting from maternity care involving the death of a baby in the Waitematā district reported to HQSC over the past five years (July 2016 – June 2021) is four deaths.

The number of injuries suffered by babies during child birth reported to HQSC during the past 5 years (July 2016 – June 2021) is five.

To provide context, the number of births that occurred during the same time period was 28,661.

- 2. What was the most common resulting loss of function ie cerebral palsy?**

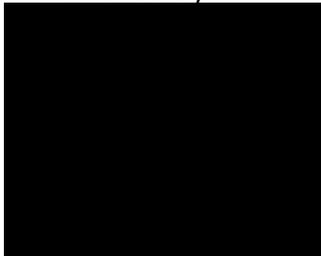
Loss of function is not usually diagnosed until the infant is much older, for example cerebral palsy is generally not diagnosed until the child is 18-24 months old. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the injury is short-lived or long-term when the report is made.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community 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 consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Executive Director Hospital Services
Waitematā District Health Board**