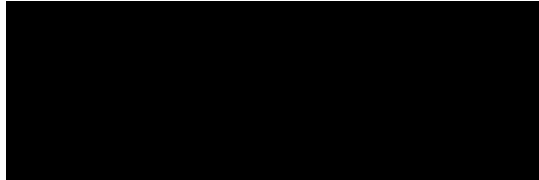


2 February 2022



Dear 

**Re: OIA request – Cancer misdiagnosis or delays in diagnosis**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received 17 December 2021, seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about cancer misdiagnosis or delays in diagnosis.

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 people had a cancer misdiagnosis in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?**
- 2. How many people had a delayed diagnosis of cancer in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?**

We are providing a combined response to questions 1 and 2.

The information you are seeking is not held in a way that is easily accessible as potential late or misdiagnosis of cancer is not hard-coded in our systems. There are a number of ways to record this information and it would require months-long investigations across multiple systems to, in the first instance, source all of the information and then undertake a clinical review of relevant individual patient records to confirm that a clinical misdiagnosis had taken place.

In addition, patients enter our hospital system through any number of services or as outpatients and may then be referred to Auckland DHB for treatment and specialities that are not provided by Waitematā DHB:

- chemotherapy treatment (excluding day-stay for haematology patients)
- radiation treatment
- gynaecology cancers
- all lung cancers (cardiothoracic)
- some otorhinolaryngology (ORL) cancers.

Due to the sensitivity of the information, it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would require our clinical staff to review individual clinical files, which would take them away from their frontline work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to seek a review is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

However, we hold records on the number of treatment injury claims accepted by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), as follows:

<b>Waitematā DHB number of accepted ACC 'Treatment Injury' claims for late or misdiagnosed cancer from 2017-2021</b>	
<b>Financial year (1 July – 30 June)</b>	<b>Number of <b>accepted</b> ACC treatment injury claims for late or misdiagnosed cancer</b>
2016/2017	1
2017/2018	0
2018/2019	4
2019/2020	1
2020/2021	0

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**