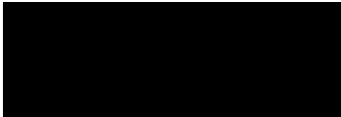




Waitemata
District Health Board
Best Care for Everyone

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26 March 2019



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – termination of pregnancy

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 5 March 2019 seeking the following of Waitemata District Health Board (DHB):

- *How many women in your district were between 20 - 24 weeks pregnant and approved for a surgical abortion in Australia each year between 2013 and 2018?*
- *How many abortion procedures have been performed in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?*
- *How many women were given the abortion pill in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?*
- *How many women were given the abortion pill in your district and were 8 weeks pregnant or more when they received it, in each year between 2013 and 2018?*
- *What is the latest stage of pregnancy a woman had an abortion in your district and for what reason?*
- *How many women in your district had an abortion due to physical health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*
- *How many women in your district had an abortion due to mental health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*
- *Could you please give me an ethnic breakdown of all the women who have had abortions in your district each year between 2013 and 2018? - and could you please include women who were given abortion pills to take home*
- *How many women chose to take their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) home after the abortion procedure? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*
- *How many women chose to leave their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) at the hospital to be cremated? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*
- *How many women changed their mind and cancelled after their first appointment (or consult), second appointment (or consult), and even on the day? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018).*

Abortion services at Waitemata DHB are available through a number of providers both in the public and private sector. Many of the procedures for Waitemata DHB-domiciled women are performed at Auckland DHB Epsom Day Unit as part of a regional agreement. Therefore, the most accurate data available is in the National Women's Health Annual Clinical Report¹, published by Auckland DHB, the Abortion Supervisory Committee in their annual report², and via Statistics NZ³, which publishes trend data. Given this, we have responded to a number of your queries below by directing you to the most-appropriate source of information.

Please see the links below:

1. <http://nationalwomenshealth.adhb.govt.nz/healthprofessionals/annual-clinical-report/national-womens-annual-clinical-report/> - Page 190 onwards
2. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/abortion-supervisory-committee/annual-reports/>
3. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/abortion-statistics-year-ended-december-2017>

How many women in your district were between 20 - 24 weeks pregnant and approved for a surgical abortion in Australia each year between 2013 and 2018?

Waitemata DHB does not have information dating back to 2013 but can confirm there have been no women from our district sent to Australia in the past five years for treatment funded by the public health system.

How many abortion procedures have been performed in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?

Abortion Supervisory Committee reports (2013-2018) record the number of terminations by hospital and by area of residence. However, Auckland-resident women are aggregated, so it is not possible to provide data specifically for Waitemata DHB-domiciled women.

How many women were given the abortion pill in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?

How many women were given the abortion pill in your district and were 8 weeks pregnant or more when they received it, in each year between 2013 and 2018?

Medical termination of pregnancy numbers are reported in the National Womens Health Annual reports by DHB-of-residence (p193). In addition, some medical termination of pregnancy procedures for women between 13 and 18 weeks occurred at Waitemata DHB. Because procedures take place in different centres, it is likely that the most-comprehensive set of information is available from the Abortion Supervisory Committee (please refer to link above).

What is the latest stage of pregnancy a woman had an abortion in your district and for what reason?

Terminations can occur very late in pregnancy and, in general, this is due to the diagnosis of a major congenital abnormality, which is not consistent with life and would result in a major mental health trauma to the mother. As numbers are so small, and individual circumstances are unique, we are unable to disclose this information as it may be possible to identify individual women.

This decision is made under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act as we believe withholding is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons.

If you wish to seek an independent review of this decision, you have the right to contact the Office of the Ombudsman via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

How many women in your district had an abortion due to physical health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018).

How many women in your district had an abortion due to mental health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)

Details about indication for termination of pregnancy are held by the Abortion Supervisory Committee (please refer to page 21).

Could you please give me an ethnic breakdown of all the women who have had abortions in your district each year between 2013 and 2018? - and could you please include women who were given abortion pills to take home

The table below is from the National Womens Health report (p193) and shows the ethnic breakdown of women by DHB-of-residence in 2017 for both medical and surgical terminations.

Table 243: Medical and surgical first trimester termination of pregnancy by ethnicity and DHB of residence 2017 (includes TOP in EDU GSU and ACH)

| | Auckland | | | Counties Manukau | | | Waitemata | | | Other DHB | | TOTAL | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | S | M | M% | S | M | M% | S | M | M% | S | M | S | M | M% |
| Māori | 168 | 4 | 2.3 | 303 | 24 | 7.3 | 219 | 13 | 5.6 | 11 | 0 | 701 | 41 | 5.5 |
| Pacific | 175 | 10 | 5.4 | 386 | 15 | 3.7 | 151 | 6 | 3.8 | 0 | 0 | 712 | 31 | 4.2 |
| Asian | 286 | 37 | 11.5 | 397 | 36 | 8.3 | 246 | 25 | 9.2 | 2 | 1 | 931 | 99 | 9.6 |
| MELAA | 19 | 3 | 13.6 | 14 | 3 | 17.6 | 27 | 2 | 6.9 | 1 | 0 | 61 | 8 | 11.6 |
| Other European | 62 | 15 | 19.5 | 39 | 5 | 11.4 | 106 | 23 | 17.8 | 1 | 1 | 208 | 44 | 17.5 |
| NZ European | 258 | 47 | 15.4 | 185 | 32 | 14.7 | 401 | 72 | 15.2 | 11 | 0 | 855 | 151 | 15.0 |
| Other Ethnicity | 2 | 1 | * | 2 | 0 | * | 2 | 1 | * | 1 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 22.2 |
| Total | 970 | 117 | 10.8 | 1326 | 115 | 8.0 | 1152 | 142 | 11.0 | 27 | 2 | 3475 | 376 | 9.8 |

S = STOP M = MTOP M% = MTOP%

* not calculated due to small numbers

How many women chose to take their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) home after the abortion procedure? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)

How many women chose to leave their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) at the hospital to be cremated? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)

The experience of the service is that many women choose to take their pregnancy tissue or fetus home with them. However, some women do not choose to do this. This is an individual personal choice and we do not keep statistical data on this.

How many women changed their mind and cancelled after their first appointment (or consult), second appointment (or consult), and even on the day? (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018).

Women can change their minds at any point in this process up to the start of the procedure. We do not keep statistical information on women who have exited the termination process.

Waitemata DHB, 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 this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cath Cronin', written in a cursive style.

Cath Cronin
Director Hospital Services
Waitemata District Health Board