
16 March 2022



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Hospitalisations caused solely by COVID-19

Thank you for your Official Information Act request partially transferred to us on 22 February by the Ministry of Health seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about COVID-19 hospitalisations.

The Ministry of Health transferred question 1 of your request.

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 question 2 of your full request to the Ministry of Health, we are able to provide the following information:

Please supply hospitalisation caused solely by COVID-19, where COVID is the only diagnosis listed, broken down by age group 0-9, 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80-89, 90+ and by gender and by vaccination / or non-vaccination status between February 1 2020 up to and including January 31 2022.

Where numbers are lower than five, we are withholding the exact number under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. We have considered whether the public interest in releasing the information outweighs the need to protect the privacy of individual patients and have determined that it does not. Disclosing the exact number, as well as patients' vaccination status, creates the risk that individuals will be identifiable.

We have considered whether the public interest in releasing this information outweighs the need for individual privacy and have concluded that it does not. The general expectation that medical records will be kept confidential means that any patients concerned are entitled to rely on the DHB not to create the risk that they will be identified.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

It should be noted that providing accurate data on the number of people in hospital with COVID-19 is difficult as COVID-19 may not be the standalone reason for hospitalisation. Caution is advised in comparing the data to that of other DHBs, who may have used different methodology.

In providing the data we have used the following International Classification of Diseases (ICD) codes.

ICD code	Description
B342	Coronavirus infection, unspecified site
B972	Coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified to other chapters

It is expected that most people in hospital with COVID-19 will be vaccinated, as 95 per cent of the eligible population over the age of 12 in the Waitematā district is at least partially vaccinated. The Ministry of Health notes that unvaccinated people are over-represented in the current hospitalisation data and being vaccinated helps keep people out of hospital, with a booster dose providing a high level of protection against Omicron. Visit <https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-news-and-media-updates> for more information.

Waitematā DHB hospitalised COVID-19 patients by gender, age group and vaccination status from February 1 2020 to January 31 2022

Age Group	Vaccinated*	Unvaccinated
Female		
00-09		<5
10-19	6	
20-29	31	10
30-39	28	12
40-49	25	6
50-59	17	14
60-69	13	<5
70-79	7	<5
80-89	12	<5
90+	<5	<5
Male		
00-09		5
10-19	6	
20-29	19	9
30-39	18	5
40-49	26	9
50-59	24	15
60-69	25	7
70-79	15	<5
80-89	<5	<5
90+	<5	<5

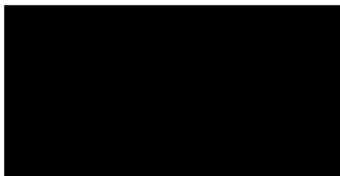
* Vaccinated with 1, 2 or 3 doses.

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**