

15 August 2022

Jai Ganesh

fyi-request-19910-015d2e2e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Jai,

Your Official Information Act request, reference H202205884:

Thank you for your email on 14 July 2022 requesting information relating to the data and reporting of mortality and hospitalisations in the last three years.

As part of the transformation of the health and disability system reforms, as of 1 July 2022 the functions previously under the Ministry of Health's Data and Digital directorate has now transferred to Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand (Te Whatu Ora). As the matters you have raised now fall under the functions of Te Whatu Ora, our agency will respond to your request which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You requested the following:

"We're now in 2022, I was wondering why we don't have a data breakdown of mortality and hospitalisations by causes broken down for 2020, 2021 and now most of 2022. Surely it's being collected and surely there's a system where it's being collated, especially given technology has come a long way and we have a more centralised system now since pre 2019 when the reports were regular. Why isn't it available? When is it expected? Whose responsibility is it?"

Mortality

After the close of a calendar year, there is a 12-18 month process to assign cause of death codes to the majority of deaths in that year. Te Whatu Ora's clinical coding team reviews the death certificate and health history of the deceased, to assign cause of death codes. Approximately 10% of deaths are referred to the Coroner each year to determine cause. Deaths which require a coronial inquiry can take between two to three or more years for cause of death to be assigned. We do not make mortality data available publicly until the majority of deaths have been assigned a cause of death, so that the data we release is complete and accurate. The Chief Coroner has noted delays in the time it is taking them to assign cause of death codes, and there is information about this in the following article:

www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/125883560/no-end-in-sight-for-ballooning-coroners-waits.

Te Whatu Ora publishes preliminary mortality statistics, which do not include injury-related deaths information, which are typically more influenced by coronial cases, in December each year. The 2020 preliminary data will be published in December 2022.

Te Whatu Ora has a Mortality web tool that is publicly available and provides the most recent 2019 data as well as historical mortality data dating back to 1948. This information is available in the following link.

Please refer to the right hand corner of the page to open the webtool:

www.health.govt.nz/publication/mortality-web-tool

For all our other published mortality data and stats please refer to the following link:

www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/mortality-data-and-stats.

For more recent data, there is approximately a six-to-eight-week lag between a death occurring and the fact of this death being available from Te Whatu Ora data. The earliest fact of death information is available online from the Statistics New Zealand COVID-19 data portal available at:

www.stats.govt.nz/experimental/covid-19-data-portal. They also publish mortality statistics at: www.stats.govt.nz/tools/stats-infoshare Select Populations, and then Deaths.

Hospitalisations

Te Whatu Ora publishes tables of public and private hospitalisations annually. We are in the process of turning this data into an interactive web tool, which we aim to publish in October 2022.

The data series of publicly-funded hospitalisations is available at: www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/publicly-funded-hospital-discharges-series/publicly-funded-hospital-discharges-series/publicly-funded-hospital-discharges-series.

The data series of privately-funded hospitalisations is available at: www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/privately-funded-hospital-discharges-series.

For more recent data, Te Whatu Ora receives coded discharge summaries for publicly funded hospitalisations within 21 days after the month of discharge. Following the receipt of this reporting, data quality and completeness checks are undertaken. This data can be released on request within three-to-six months of the date of discharge, depending on the purpose(s) for which it will be used. However, some publicly funded hospital care happens in private facilities and are reported by the private facility which provided the care. For these cases there can be a longer delay in Te Whatu Ora receiving the hospital discharge summaries, and these then need to be coded by the clinical coding team. In addition, longer term hospitalisations, for instance long stay geriatric hospitalisations, take some time to be included in our data as we do not receive the hospital report until the person dies or is discharged.

For these reasons, we do not consider publicly funded hospitalisations data to be complete until 18 months after the end of the year of discharge. We do not publish hospitalisations data publicly on the internet until we have received the majority of hospital reports, and done data quality checks, so that the data we release is complete and accurate.

Provisional public hospitalisations data is available on request from: data-enquiries@health.govt.nz.

Private hospital providers are not legally required to report privately funded hospitalisation events to Te Whatu Ora. Most private providers do report, but there are often longer lag times between the month of discharge and Te Whatu Ora receiving the record than for public providers. There is a longer lag time for this data to be considered provisional, as the diagnoses and procedure data is assigned clinical codes by the Te Whatu Ora clinical coding team. After the close of a calendar year, there is a 12-18 month process to assign clinical codes to the majority of private hospital events in that year. Note that some publicly funded care provided by private hospitals also needs to be coded in Te Whatu Ora. Privately funded hospital discharge data is not released until all events have been reported to us, and the data has undergone data quality checking and coding. This data is therefore considered provisional within two years of the year of discharge.

Te Whatu Ora publishes hospitalisation statistics annually, in October each year. The 2019/20 data will be published in October 2022. More recent publicly funded hospitalisation data is available on request from data-enquiries@health.govt.nz.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. You are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may decide to proactively release a copy of this response on Te Whatu Ora's website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal tail stroke.

Gaynor Bradfield

Manager, Office of the Chief Data and Digital