

14 June 2023

Mr McDonald

Via email: [fyi-request-22833-53c04dbd@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-22833-53c04dbd@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Mr McDonald

### **Request for information: Medicinal cannabis prescriptions**

Thank you for your request dated 17 May 2023 under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) for information relating to medicinal cannabis prescriptions. You requested:

*Information regarding medicinal cannabis prescriptions*

*Q. How many patients have been prescribed medicinal cannabis since the start of the legal medicinal cannabis scheme?*

*Q. How many prescriptions have been written for medicinal cannabis since the start of the medicinal cannabis scheme?*

*Q. What is the average amount of cannabis prescribed per doctor's prescription? Please provide your answer in units detailing quantity and strength.*

As you are likely aware, Pharmac is the government agency responsible for determining which pharmaceuticals will be funded in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Pharmaceutical Schedule lists all pharmaceuticals that are publicly funded by Pharmac:

<https://pharmac.govt.nz/pharmaceutical-schedule/>

Pharmac does not hold the information you have requested as there are currently no [medicinal cannabis products](#) listed on the Schedule. This is because the national pharmaceutical collection data only contains claim and payment information from pharmacists for funded (subsidised) dispensings. Furthermore, the national pharmaceutical collection data set does not contain information on the number of prescriptions written.

Therefore, we have declined your request for information under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA; as Pharmac does not hold the information you have requested, nor do we believe that it is held by another Crown organisation or local government authority. We also consulted with the Ministry of Health (Manatū Hauora) and Health New Zealand (Te Whatu Ora) in making our decision on your request for information.

## **Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment applications for medicinal cannabis**

Pharmac uses its Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA) process to consider whether to fund a treatment for an individual patient whose clinical circumstances are exceptional. Pharmac has received 92 NPPA applications for medicinal cannabis products since July 2013. Overwhelmingly, the applications did not meet the principles of NPPA and were not approved.

As at June 2023, we have approved 9 NPPA applications to fund medicinal cannabis products. These approvals were for individual patients whose clinical circumstances were life-threatening and/or extremely severe. In all cases, all other treatment options had been exhausted.

You can find more information about the NPPA process [here](#).

Please note, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman about our response to your OIA, under section 28(3) of the OIA. Details of [how to make a complaint](#) are on the Ombudsman's website.

Please get in touch with us if you have any questions about this.

Nāku noa, nā



Allanah Andrews  
Manager, Policy and Government Services