

6 October 2023

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Official information request HNZ00027826

Thank you for your email which was partially transferred to Te Whatu Ora on 30 August 2023, asking for the following which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please see outlined below a response to each part of your request.

2b. Number of COVID-19 immunisation shots administered in each District Health Board area

3. Because this data should be known and captured during the COVID-19 immunisation program

- a. Please confirm what surveillance procedures are in place to record and monitor batch number allocation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across New Zealand District Health Board areas and immunisation providers.*
- c. Please confirm if any batches were halted from distribution prior to being fully used based on high numbers of AEFI or Death reports being associated with them.*
- d. Please confirm how many doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been disposed of in New Zealand due to being expired, surplus to requirement or faulty/damaged.*
- e. Please advise the monetary value of all doses disposed of to date.*
- f. Please outline how disposed doses are dealt with to safely get rid of them, including whether they are placed in landfill or any other process or means of disposal utilised.*

4. Please confirm if placebo doses of any COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in New Zealand, how these doses are identified from other doses, quantity of placebos used expressed as a percentage or number of total doses administered, and how these doses have been recorded.

5. Please confirm if Ministry of Health or its agents have knowledge of variation in strength of COVID-19 vaccine doses being administered outside of or apart from the different strength doses being supplied for children and young persons.

For the sake of clarity, I will respond to each question in the order in which you asked.

2b. Number of COVID-19 immunisation shots administered in each District Health Board area.

This information requested is refused under section 18(d) of the Act as the information requested is publicly available at: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/our-health-system/data-and-statistics/covid-vaccine-data>

3. Because this data should be known and captured during the COVID-19 immunisation program. a. Please confirm what surveillance procedures are in place to record and monitor batch number allocation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across New Zealand District Health Board areas and immunisation providers.

Te Whatu Ora maintains an inventory portal within the COVID-19 Immunisation Register to track the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across all providers of COVID-19 vaccines.

c. Please confirm if any batches were halted from distribution prior to being fully used based on high numbers of AEFI or Death reports being associated with them.

No batches of COVID-19 vaccine have had distribution halted for this reason.

d. Please confirm how many doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been disposed of in New Zealand due to being expired, surplus to requirement or faulty/damaged.

From the beginning of the COVID-19 vaccination programme up to 7 August 2023, a total of 5,838,694 COVID-19 vaccines have been disposed of due to wastage. This includes doses of the monovalent Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine that were destroyed once the Adult BA.4/5 (Bivalent) vaccine became available in March 2023. Vaccine wastage also occurred due to public uptake of COVID-19 vaccines compared to volumes committed to under Advanced Purchase Agreements with vaccine suppliers. Many of the doses that have expired in 2022/23 were purchased prior to the 2022/23 financial year.

e. Please advise the monetary value of all doses disposed of to date.

This information is refused under section 9(2) (b)(ii) of the Act as the information requested is commercially sensitive. If released, it would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

f. Please outline how disposed doses are dealt with to safely get rid of them, including whether they are placed in landfill or any other process or means of disposal utilised.

In compliance with the NZS4304:2002 regulations on the management and safe disposal of infectious and contaminated waste, vaccines are disposed of by a waste disposal company. As part of this process, vaccines are tracked to provide a visible audit system, from collection to destruction.

4. Please confirm if placebo doses of any COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in New Zealand, how these doses are identified from other doses, quantity of placebos used expressed as a percentage or number of total doses administered, and how these doses have been recorded.

No placebo doses of COVID-19 vaccine were used by either the Ministry of Health or Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand COVID-19 Immunisation programmes.

5. Please confirm if Ministry of Health or its agents have knowledge of variation in strength of COVID-19 vaccine doses being administered outside of or apart from the different strength doses being supplied for children and young persons.

There has been no reduced-dose approach to COVID-19 vaccines by the National Immunisation Programme.


How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to 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 proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Rachel Mackay
Interim Director, Prevention
National Public Health Service
Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand

Released under Official Information Act