

3 December 2024

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Tēnā koe Chris

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00067356

Thank you for your email on 2 October 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Please expand on Health NZ's previous response to OIA HNZ00061156 by breaking the numbers down into Age Range and number of doses of any COVID vaccine received by the person at the date/time of arrival at the Emergency Dept.

The response should be in a machine readable format - in a csv or Excel format is acceptable.

To recap, the original OIA read: ' The number of people under the age of 40 presenting to Emergency departments throughout NZ hospitals with Chest pain or heart issues for the years 2017 to 2024 ? (Please provide figures year by year)'

Further breakdown requested in this OIA:

1) Age Ranges - under 40, 40 to 65 inclusive, over 65

2) Doses - 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7+

3) Where a person had multiple visits to an Emergency Dept in a year please provide two columns - a total count and a unique count of NHI numbers.

Cell obfuscation:

a) Where a cell is <5 people please populate this with "<5" for confidentiality.

b) True zero cells should be shown - as zero and not marked as <5.

Please do consult as early as possible if there are any issues or questions. This a distinct OIA from my previous ones as it breaks down another person's OIA and is in the public's interest that it be responded to separately.

This is similar in intensity and effort to previous OIAs for data that Health NZ has successfully responded to. It may require linking the hospital dataset to the pay per dose/immunisation database via the NHI Number - or your data warehouses (eg Snowflake) may have already structured the required dataset - eg for safety monitoring and alarming.

I apologise for the delay in providing our response. The time taken is not what we aspire to. This is something we are working to get on top of as we deal with a high volume of requests and the understandably high public interest in our work.

Response

The information provided under HNZ00061156 should have been released with more appropriate context and caveats. These are outlined below. Health NZ has apologised for this oversight and contacted the requester as soon as this was discovered.

The apparent large rise over the last six years is a result of incomplete data collection, not an actual rise in chest pain ED presentations. What appears as a large rise in the number of ED presentations due to chest pain is a direct result of the way the data was previously collected, which did not include all districts, and was provided without the appropriate caveats and context.

We would note that 2024 is the only year that all districts at Health NZ were recording this data and only a few districts (2-4) were recording this data prior to 2020. Additionally, not all 20 districts use the same code for recording this data, so the data set is incomplete.

Chest pain on presentation to ED can be attributable to many conditions and the initial reason for presentation often differs from the final diagnosis. The data from discharge codes – i.e. the final diagnosis made when a patient is discharged – is the most valuable information when comparing data for a specific condition (but is not what was asked for).

There are significant challenges at Health NZ around the collection and recording of data, following the transition from 20 DHBs to one health entity. This is something we are working at pace to address.

In light of the above, your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information is not held by Health NZ nor another agency.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@tewhatuora.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, Health NZ 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



Emily Richards

Acting Head of Government Services

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora

TeWhatuOra.govt.nz

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government