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25 February 2025

Chris Johnston

By email: fyi-request-29126-32db9b39@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H2024055630

Tēnā koe Chris

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your requests under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 9 and 10 November 2024 for information regarding evidence briefs. Please find a response to each part of your request below:

Please provide the latest Evidence Briefs created by the Ministry's Evidence, Research and Innovation Directorate on community water fluoridation and Long COVID-19. If work on the Evidence Briefs requested in (1) is currently underway and cannot be released then please provide the correspondence that initiated the work - including the terms of reference, any instructions on objectives and scope etc, and any resulting communication (eg clarifying questions, meeting minutes and instructions for delegated work packages). Please also provide the planned completion date.

The Ministry of Health review of the evidence about the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation was published on 4 December 2024 and is available on the Ministry's website at: www.health.govt.nz/publications/community-water-fluoridation-an-evidence-review

The long COVID evidence brief is available on the Ministry's website at: www.health.govt.nz/publications/prolonged-symptoms-attributable-to-infection-with-covid-19

3) Please identify which group within the MoH is "undertaking the Bill of Rights analysis of the directions to ensure that section 11 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 is considered". Please provide the correspondence that initiated the work - including the terms of reference, any instructions on objectives and scope etc, and any resulting communication (eg clarifying questions, meeting minutes and instructions for delegated work packages). Please also provide the planned completion date.

The Ministry has identified one document within scope of parts 3 and 4 of your request, titled 'Memo: Proposed process for assessment of fluoridation directions against the Bill of Rights Act'. A copy is enclosed and is released to you in full. As detailed in the memo to the Director-General, the Director-General was directed by a High Court Judge to assess each of the 14 directions to fluoridate under section 11 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. This work was initiated by the High Court's ruling. The Public Health Agency worked together with Health Legal, and the Evidence, Research and Innovation directorate to undertake the New Zealand Bill of Rights assessment of the directions. The assessment has now been completed and is available on the Ministry of Health website here:

4) Please provide any evidence that the Evidence Briefs by Ministry's Evidence, Research and Innovation Directorate on Community fluoridation and the review regarding the Bill of Rights are coordinated. This could for example be an email trail confirming that the two teams are communicating, or possibly a revised Evidence Brief being provided to the Bill of Rights review. There may be other ways to provide this evidence - eg a project plan showing that the draft outcomes of both work streams will be considered together before either complete.

The review of the evidence about the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation was carried out by the Chief Science Advisor and the Evidence, Research and Innovation Directorate of the Ministry of Health. The Bill of Rights assessment was prepared by the Public Health Agency and was informed by the evidence review. The memo being released to you to fulfil part 3 and this part 4 of your request sets out how the teams prepared these two pieces of advice. Both workstreams culminated in a package of work that was carefully considered by the Director-General of Health prior to the directions being re-confirmed.

In OIA H2024053399 it was stated that "The Ministry's Evidence, Research and Innovation Directorate was established in July 2022."

Please provide a list of all the Evidence Briefs created, delivered or underway by the Evidence Research and Innovation Directorate since it was established in July 2022.

Against each Evidence Brief please indicate:

- Status (eg completed, underway)*
- Who requested it (eg Minister, GM of another Directorate)*
- A short description of the problem or question being addressed by the work (which for example could be extracted from the intro or executive summary).*

The information you have requested is provided in Appendix 1.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on:

oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at:

info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Andrew Old
Deputy Director-General
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui

Appendix 1: List of evidence briefs created by the Evidence, Research, and Innovation Directorate

Name of Evidence Brief	Status	Requested by	Summary
Risk of adverse events following mesh and non-mesh repairs of groin hernias	Completed.	Office of the Chief Clinical Officers in late 2023.	This addresses the evidence question: what does the international literature report on the risks of the use of mesh vs non-mesh in the repair of groin hernias.
Medical education for societal impact	Completed in February 2024.	Strategy, Policy, and Legislation in January 2024	This brief addressed the evidence question: what models of medical education exist in the international and New Zealand literature, and what are the impacts of establishing a new medical school.
Graduate vs undergraduate medical education	Completed in March 2024	Strategy, Policy, and Legislation in January 2024	This brief addressed the evidence question: what does the international literature report on the advantages and disadvantages of graduate vs undergraduate medical education.
Nurse-led primary care	Completed in October 2024	Di Sarfati, Director-General of Health, in October 2024	This addressed the evidence question: what evidence exists on the advantages and disadvantages of non-doctor led primary care clinics.
Underserved and underrepresented: Pacific peoples in rural Aotearoa New Zealand Commissioned as part of the Academic Engagement Work Programme	To be completed	-	This Evidence Brief (the Brief) provides an overview of the health aspirations and perspectives of Pacific peoples residing in rural and remote areas of Aotearoa.
Gerontechnology: A Scoping Review of Telehealth and Ageing in Place Initiatives for Kaumātua with a Focus on Dementia and Loneliness	To be completed	Commissioned as part of the Academic Engagement Work Programme	This scoping review uncovers the potential of gerontechnology, telehealth and ageing-in-place innovations to not only address the pressing health needs of Kaumātua but to

			contribute to a dynamic, sustainable healthcare system that benefits all New Zealanders.
Rural health in Aotearoa – from current evidence to future challenges Commissioned as part of the Academic Engagement Work Programme	To be completed	Commissioned as part of the Academic Engagement Work Programme	The aims of this evidence brief are to summarise the current evidence base on rural health in Aotearoa New Zealand and highlight future challenges and opportunities in this space. Broadly, this evidence brief covers the following areas: 1. how new tools have identified rural-urban disparities. 2. the growing rural health evidence base, particularly in relation to key issues of rural health equity, service accessibility, and workforce. 3. a brief horizon scan of future challenges and opportunities for building an equitable and resilient rural health system in Aotearoa.
Health care and rare disorders, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, November 2023	Completed.	Strategy, Policy, and Legislation in February 2023 to support the Rare Disorders Strategy	The aim of the Brief was to provide: • a summary of current knowledge and scientific literature on the treatment of, and care for people who have a rare disorder • evidence to inform the development of a rare disorder strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand.
Centres of excellence in health and disability service delivery, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, December 2023	Completed.	Strategy, Policy, and Legislation in February 2024 to support the Rare Disorders Strategy	A rapid scoping review was undertaken to gather insights into the effectiveness and impact of CoEs as an approach to complex health care. The review included a scan of Aotearoa New Zealand examples of comparable centres to

			provide additional insight into the relevance for the local context.
Invasive Group A Streptococcus and skin infections, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, July 2024	Completed.	Office of the Director of Public Health to support invasive Group A Streptococcus becoming a notifiable disease	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A review of national and international research on links between Group A streptococcus (GAS) skin infections/impetigo and invasive Group A streptococcal (iGAS) disease, post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis (PSGN), acute rheumatic fever (ARF) and rheumatic heart disease (RHD). 2. International evidence on population interventions to treat GAS skin infections and impact (if any) on iGAS as well as PSGN and RF/RHD. 3. An investigation into the potential for a retrospective (or prospective) case review/research of iGAS and PSGN cases to look at modifiable risk factors.
Primary and Community Healthcare: Operating Model, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, May 2024		Strategy, Policy, and Legislation in May 2024 to support primary care policy development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What decisions about primary care should be made at which levels of the system [in support of more localised decision making]? 2. How should primary and community care system structures be aligned to the wider social sector in order to address the wider determinants of health? 3. What are the parameters for setting the balance between national consistency and local flexibility in primary care [to achieve the

			overall outcomes sought by the system]?
Increasing the duration of a prescription: implications for costs and prescriber behaviour, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, October 2024		Director-General of Health to support primary care strategy	This document provides a brief overview of the potential impact of regulatory changes that increase the duration of prescribing (e.g. from 3 months to 12 months) on prescribing behaviour and medication costs.
Evidence Synthesis: Extreme Weather Events in 2023 and the health system response, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, August 2024		Chief Science Advisor for advice to Chief Science Advisor forum	The synthesis draws on the Ministry of Health commissioned research <i>Te Weu me Te Wai Research into health and wellbeing impacts of adverse weather conditions</i> , and ten of the other formal reviews or reports published in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle. Key findings are summarised and relevant recommendations for each of these are provided at the end of each corresponding section.
Impact of Puberty Blockers in Gender-Dysphoric Adolescents: An evidence brief, November 2024	Completed.	Chief Medical Officer	The evidence brief is limited to: 1. Clinical and mental health and wellbeing outcomes in gender-dysphoric adolescents prescribed GnRHa 2. A stocktake of legislative or governance arrangements relating to the prescription of GnRHa for gender-dysphoric adolescents.
Addendum to Impact of Puberty Blockers in Gender Dysphoric	Completed.	Chief Medical Officer	The addendum provides an update on Impact of Puberty Blockers in

Adolescents: An evidence brief, Office of the Chief Science Advisor, November 2024			Gender-Dysphoric Adolescents: An evidence brief (evidence brief).
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