

5 May 2026

David Robinson

By email: [fyi-request-34400-d934db6a@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-34400-d934db6a@requests.fyi.org.nz)  
Ref: H2026081056

Tēnā koe David

### Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on April 6.

On April 20, the below parts of your request were transferred to Pharmac, the Ministry of Justice, and Health New Zealand. You can expect a response from these agencies in due course, and can contact them here:

- Pharmac: [enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz)
- Ministry of Justice: [OIA@justice.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@justice.govt.nz)
- Health New Zealand: [hnzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz](mailto:hnzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz)

*- Provide information on how many medicines were imported where the original package writing wasn't in English, which languages they were in, and what steps Ministry took to ensure the provenance of the medicines.*

*- Describe the number of deaths that were reported in association with suspicious or unapproved medicines in New Zealand, since 2020, and where possible, provide an estimate of how many deaths, and SAC1-4 incidents, may have been associated with these, and what steps have been taken to investigate these.*

*- Where deaths occurred in association with suspicious or unapproved medicines during this time period, what was the interval between these being reported to Ministry and Health New Zealand, and being reported to the coroner. What was the interval in them being reported to the coroner. What was the interval in them being reported to police.*

*- Where the deaths were already known to be unnatural (such as suicides or homicides), and suspicious or unapproved medicines were used, what was the average interval between being notified about these concerns, and notifying the coroner, police, courts, prosecutors, and defendants?*

*- For the large numbers of suspicious and unapproved medicines used across New Zealand, outline the steps that Ministry and Health New Zealand took to ensure that health managers were aware of this issue, and that clinicians knew about their obligation to obtain consent and to provide open disclosure."*

The Ministry will respond to the rest of your request in turn:

*- Provide information on Ministry, and Health New Zealand's guidance to organisations to ensure that these medicines were known not to be counterfeit, expired, perished, nor have any other issues with them.*

Information is publicly available about the supply and responsibilities around unapproved medicine. These can be found at the following links; therefore section 18(d) of the Act applies:

- Supplying unapproved medicines: [www.medsafe.govt.nz/regulatory/unapproved.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/regulatory/unapproved.asp).
- Use of unapproved medicines and use of approved medicines for an unapproved purpose: [www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/RIss/unapp.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/RIss/unapp.asp).
- Supplying products which are not approved medicines: [www.medsafe.govt.nz/compliance/Marketing.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/compliance/Marketing.asp).

*- Where intermediaries are known to have facilitated the importing and distribution of suspicious or unknown medicines in New Zealand, what steps were taken to investigate them and what actions were taken to prevent further harm, particularly in the context of the current global supply shock.*

*- Did any particular organisations use suspicious or unapproved medicines more than any others, and if so, has Ministry or Health New Zealand, taken any steps to ascertain what the reasons for this were, and to prevent any further harm?"*

On 22 April 2026, you were informed by the Ministry that this part of your request covered a substantial amount of information and you were asked to limit your request to certain types of incidents, a time period, and to clarify the meaning of "intermediaries." You were asked to respond by close of business 24 April 2026.

As we have not received a response from you to date and the information requested is not made with due particularity required by section 12 of the Act, the Ministry is unable to confidently or comprehensively respond to your request. Please note that section 12(2) of the Act requires that official information requested should be specified with due particularity in order for the requirements of the Act to apply.

Accordingly, the above part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. I have considered whether charging or extending the time to compile the information would enable us to respond. However, I do not believe it is in the public interest to do so.

*- What briefings did Ministry and Health New Zealand, receive about the supply chain issue, and that there were potential issues with the supply chain.*

Medsafe and Pharmac would receive information from companies on potential supply issues. Partial transfer of this request under section 14(i) of the Act was queried, but they did not accept. Owing to the wording of your request, the Ministry cannot confidently respond. We did ask you to clarify on 22 April, but as we have not heard from you, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

*- Provide information on the number of incidents submitted to health incident managements systems, in both Health New Zealand hospitals, air and road ambulance, primary care and private hospitals, and what steps were taken to communicate about this with health providers.*

This part of your request is also refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information is not held by the the Ministry, and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

Please note, the Ministry remains willing and engaged on any new and refined request you may wish to make. The Ombudsman provides guidance on how to make requests at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/making-official-information-requests](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/making-official-information-requests).

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](mailto: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](mailto: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 Ministry website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā



Chris James  
**Group Manager**  
**Medsafe**