

14 May 2026

Mr Richards
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Tēnā koe Mr Richards

Your request for official information, reference: HN200202714

Thank you for your request for information, which was partially transferred to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora from the Ministry of Health on 22 April 2026, asking for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

- 1. All documents, briefings, minutes, emails, risk assessments, modelling, or internal advice prepared or considered by the Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora, or the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) when deciding — in the 27 March 2026 amendments to Chapter 5 of the Immunisation Handbook — to retain a routine recommendation for a primary COVID-19 vaccine course (one dose for healthy previously unvaccinated individuals aged 5 years and over; two doses for severely immunocompromised individuals aged 5 years and over), while simultaneously advising that additional doses are “not routinely recommended” for healthy adults aged 30–64 years due to lower clinical risk of severe infection and high population hybrid immunity.*
- 2. Any epidemiological modelling, cohort studies, or risk-benefit analyses (using 2025–2026 data) assessing the incremental benefit of a primary dose (or two-dose primary course) in previously unvaccinated healthy or immunocompromised individuals against severe COVID-19 outcomes, hospitalisation, or death under current endemic conditions with LP.8.1-lineage strains and widespread hybrid immunity.*
- 3. The most recent surveillance data (2025–2026) on severe COVID-19 outcomes in the remaining unvaccinated population (including those eligible for a primary course) compared with those possessing hybrid immunity, stratified by age group, comorbidity status, and ethnicity.*
- 6. Any internal advice or modelling addressing (a) equity impacts (including for Māori and Pacific populations) of retaining the current primary-course recommendation versus (b) moving the primary course to a shared clinical decision-making / optional model only, consistent with the approach taken for additional doses in healthy 30–64 year-olds.*
- 7. All correspondence, briefings, advice, or assessments exchanged between the Ministry of Health / Te Whatu Ora and the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) concerning NZDF’s “further review” of its baseline vaccination schedule triggered by the 27 March 2026 Immunisation Handbook changes. This includes any evaluation of how the risk-stratified approach and reduced routine recommendations for healthy adults apply to NZDF serving members and recruits, with specific reference to NZDF OIA-2026-5687 and follow-up request 34315 (including impacts on recruitment, retention, the ~164 previously discharged personnel, and NZDF’s status as the only remaining Five Eyes nation with a COVID-19 baseline requirement).*

Response

As you have been advised, Health NZ has decided to transfer the following parts of your request under section 14 of the OIA:

- Parts 1, 2 and 6 have been transferred to the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC).
- Part 7 has been transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF).

You can expect a response from NZDF and IMAC in due course.

3. The most recent surveillance data (2025–2026) on severe COVID-19 outcomes in the remaining unvaccinated population (including those eligible for a primary course) compared with those possessing hybrid immunity, stratified by age group, comorbidity status, and ethnicity.

The information in this part is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as Health NZ does not hold the surveillance data requested and we do not believe it is held by any other agency subject to the OIA. However, Health NZ provides weekly reporting of cases and hospital admissions with demographic breakdowns: www.healthnz.govt.nz/about-us/health-data/data-sets-and-collections/covid-19-data-and-statistics/covid-19-reporting.

How to get in touch

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



Sara Freitag

Manager, Government Services