

Clinical : Diagnostic Services
Proactive Release : 20 December 2018

05 November 2018

██████████
Health Reporter
Stuff/ Fairfax

E-mail: ██████████

Dear ██████████,

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 23 November 2018. You requested the following information:

- **Does the DHB record the amount of radioactive waste being produced/ as a by-product of operating radiology/ diagnostic machines, including but not exclusive to X-rays, PET and CT scans and radiation therapy?**
- **How much radioactive waste is being produced at the DHB per year?**
- **How and where is this radioactive waste disposed of?**

At CM Health, we do not provide services that use radioactive substances in any of our diagnostic Radiology procedures. Radiation Therapy and Nuclear Medicine services are not provided at CM Health facilities.

For reference, X-ray machines and CT scanners only produce X-rays when the tube is switched on for an exposure – as soon as the current is switched off, the radiation ceases. As no radioactive substances are involved, no radioactive waste occurs.

CM Health uses radionuclides for a small number of Sentinel Node Biopsy procedures performed locally each year. The product has a fast half-life, and the volume used is not considered to present any significant radiological waste risk when disposed. Any chemical remaining/ unused is kept securely at the hospital for 24 hours, and then returned to the supplier for disposal/management. Associated wastes (items with contact during the procedure) are also kept for 24 hours, and then disposed.

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Apa', with a stylized circular flourish above the name.

Margie Apa
Chief Executive