

28 March 2019



E-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request dated 05 March 2019. You requested the following information:

1. **How many women in your district were between 20 - 24 weeks pregnant and approved for a surgical abortion in Australia each year between 2013 and 2018?**
2. **How many abortion procedures have been performed in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?**
3. **How many women were given the abortion pill in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?**
4. **How many women were given the abortion pill in your district and were 8 weeks pregnant or more when they received it, in each year between 2013 and 2018?**
5. **What is the latest stage of pregnancy a woman had an abortion in your district and for what reason?**
6. **How many women in your district had an abortion due to physical health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue?**
 - (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)
7. **How many women in your district had an abortion due to mental health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue?**
 - (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)
8. **Could you please give me an ethnic breakdown of all the women who have had abortions in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?**
 - And could you please include women who were given abortion pills to take home.
9. **How many women chose to take their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) home after the abortion procedure?**
 - (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)
10. **How many women chose to leave their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) at the hospital to be cremated?**
 - (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)
11. **How many women changed their mind and cancelled after their first appointment (or consult), second appointment (or consult), and even on the day?**
 - (Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018).

On 6 March 2019, we contacted you to clarify the scope of the request, and you clarified that your definition of access to surgical abortions, and abortion procedures was as follows:

- **How many women in your district were between 20 - 24 weeks pregnant and approved for a surgical abortion in Australia each year between 2013 and 2018?**
 - *I want to know if any women in your district have requested a late-term abortion and were approved for one, and have had to travel to Australia for the procedure. (I'm assuming that the procedure isn't done here in New Zealand).*
- **Could you also please include 'all' types of abortions (medical, surgical etc.) in reference to any of my other questions asked about 'abortions' or 'abortion procedures'?**
- **The only exception being the question referring to the 'abortion pill', and the first question about surgical abortions in Australia.**

Termination of Pregnancy (TOP) services for the metro-Auckland region, including for Counties Manukau DHB are available through a number of providers, both in the public and private sector. Many of these procedures are performed at Auckland DHB Epsom Day Unit, as part of a regional agreement. Therefore, the most accurate data available is in the National Women's Health Annual Clinical Report¹, published by Auckland DHB, the Abortion Supervisory Committee in their annual report², and via Statistics NZ³, which publishes trend data.

Given this, we have responded to a number of your queries below by directing you to the most-appropriate source of information.

Please see the links below:

1. <http://nationalwomenshealth.adhb.govt.nz/healthprofessionals/annual-clinical-report/national-womens-annual-clinical-report/> - Page 190 onwards
2. <https://www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/abortion-supervisory-committee/annual-reports/>
3. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/abortion-statistics-year-ended-december-2017>

Responses for CM Health are below each question:

1. How many women in your district were between 20 - 24 weeks pregnant and approved for a surgical abortion in Australia each year between 2013 and 2018?

Counties Manukau DHB does not have information dating back to 2013, but can confirm there have been no women who were funded by the public health system that were sent to Australia in the past 5 years from our district.

2. How many abortion procedures have been performed in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?

The Abortion Supervisory Committee reports (2013-2018) record the number of terminations by hospital, and by area of residence. However, Auckland-resident women are aggregated, so it is not possible to provide data specifically for Counties Manukau domiciled women.

3. How many women were given the abortion pill in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?

4. How many women were given the abortion pill in your district and were 8 weeks pregnant or more when they received it, in each year between 2013 and 2018?

Medical termination of pregnancy numbers are reported in the National Women's Health Annual reports by DHB-of-residence (p193). In addition, some medical terminations of pregnancy procedures for women between 13-18 weeks occur at CM Health under the care of our Foetal Medicine Service. Because procedures take place in different centres, it is likely that the most-comprehensive set of information is available from the Abortion Supervisory Committee (*please refer to link above*).

5. What is the latest stage of pregnancy a woman had an abortion in your district, and for what reason?

Terminations can occur very late in pregnancy and, in general, this is due to the diagnosis of a major congenital abnormality, which is not consistent with life, and would result in a major mental health trauma to the mother. As numbers are so small, and individual circumstances are unique, we are unable to disclose this information as it may be possible to identify individual women and this outweighs public interest considerations.

This decision is made under Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act, as we believe withholding is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons.

If you wish to seek an independent review of this decision, you have the right to contact the Office of the Ombudsman via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

6. How many women in your district had an abortion due to physical health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue?

- *(Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018).*

7. How many women in your district had an abortion due to mental health concerns if the pregnancy was to continue?

- *(Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*

Details about indication for termination of pregnancy are held by the Abortion Supervisory Committee (refer to page 21).

8. Could you please give me an ethnic breakdown of all the women who have had abortions in your district each year between 2013 and 2018?

- *And could you please include women who were given abortion pills to take home*

The table (below) is from the National Women's Health report (refer to page 193), and provides the most recent ethnic break-down of women by DHB-of-residence in 2017, for both medical and surgical terminations.

We note that the ethnic and demographic composition of each DHBs community will significantly influence the raw data rates, and this data should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Table 243: Medical and surgical first trimester termination of pregnancy by ethnicity and DHB of residence 2017 (includes TOP in EDU GSU and ACH)

| | Auckland | | | Counties Manukau | | | Waitemata | | | Other DHB | | TOTAL | | |
|------------------------|----------|-----|------|------------------|-----|------|-----------|-----|------|-----------|---|-------|-----|------|
| | S | M | M% | S | M | M% | S | M | M% | S | M | S | M | M% |
| Māori | 168 | 4 | 2.3 | 303 | 24 | 7.3 | 219 | 13 | 5.6 | 11 | 0 | 701 | 41 | 5.5 |
| Pacific | 175 | 10 | 5.4 | 386 | 15 | 3.7 | 151 | 6 | 3.8 | 0 | 0 | 712 | 31 | 4.2 |
| Asian | 286 | 37 | 11.5 | 397 | 36 | 8.3 | 246 | 25 | 9.2 | 2 | 1 | 931 | 99 | 9.6 |
| MELAA | 19 | 3 | 13.6 | 14 | 3 | 17.6 | 27 | 2 | 6.9 | 1 | 0 | 61 | 8 | 11.6 |
| Other European | 62 | 15 | 19.5 | 39 | 5 | 11.4 | 106 | 23 | 17.8 | 1 | 1 | 208 | 44 | 17.5 |
| NZ European | 258 | 47 | 15.4 | 185 | 32 | 14.7 | 401 | 72 | 15.2 | 11 | 0 | 855 | 151 | 15.0 |
| Other Ethnicity | 2 | 1 | * | 2 | 0 | * | 2 | 1 | * | 1 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 22.2 |
| Total | 970 | 117 | 10.8 | 1326 | 115 | 8.0 | 1152 | 142 | 11.0 | 27 | 2 | 3475 | 376 | 9.8 |

S = STOP M = MTOP M% = MTOP%

* not calculated due to small numbers

9. How many women chose to take their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) home after the abortion procedure?

- *(Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*

10. How many women chose to leave their pregnancies (foetus, tissue, product etc.) at the hospital to be cremated?

- *(Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018)*

The experience of the service is that many women choose to take their pregnancy tissue or foetus home with them. However, some women do not choose to do this. This is an individual personal choice, and we do not keep statistical data on this.

11. How many women changed their mind and cancelled after their first appointment (or consult), second appointment (or consult), and even on the day?

- *(Please break these figures down by each year between 2013 and 2018).*

Women can change their minds at any point in this process, up to the start of the procedure. We do not keep statistical information on women who have exited the termination process.

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,



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive