

Public Health : Measles
Proactive Release: 28 November 2019

20th November 2019

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Dear 9(2)(a)

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us on 1 November 2019, via transfer from Auckland DHB under Section 14 of the Act. You requested the following information:

- **How many hospital patients, initially admitted for non-measles reasons – were infected [HAI] with measles in Middlemore Hospital in 2019?**
 - **How many CMDHB community cases were a direct result of contact with patients subsequently infected hospital acquired measles?**

As context for this response, Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 569,400 people), as well as regional and supra regional specialist services (Burns, Plastics and Orthopaedics).

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient/ ambulatory and community-based models of care. We employ more than 7,500 staff, and see more than 118,000 presentations at the Middlemore Hospital Emergency Department each year.

Our responses to your questions are below:

- **How many hospital patients, initially admitted for non-measles reasons – were infected [HAI] with measles in Middlemore Hospital in 2019?**
 - **How many CMDHB community cases were a direct result of contact with patients subsequently infected hospital acquired measles?**

Due to the current high prevalence of cases in the Counties Manukau community at this time, and very infectious nature of measles, that is present prior to an evident rash or symptoms, it remains difficult to confirm where individuals contract measles. The current measles outbreak has seen the largest number of cases in NZ occurring in the Counties Manukau district.

We do not hold any information that definitively confirms where cases of measles were contracted, or cases that were transmitted to patients during a hospital admission. We note that measles is a notifiable illness, for which cases all in New Zealand are reported under the Health Act. Cases are then

all treated the same, including clinical management during the illness, appropriate isolation/quarantine measures, and any relevant public health screening or contact tracing processes.

Given the large numbers of people on hospital sites at any one time cross-transmission of any virus by unwell visitors and staff can occur, and definitive tracing is problematic. It is particularly difficult to segregate members of the public and patients who are asymptomatic.

We have robust infection control measures in place for people admitted to hospital. Infection Prevention and Control 'Standard Precautions', the use of isolation, and routine hand-hygiene are all important to reduce the risk of exposure to transmittable diseases. These controls are designed to prevent the spread of any infection in the hospital, in conjunction with employee immunity screening and proactive vaccination for vaccine-preventable illnesses.

We are also promoting additional key messages in response to the measles outbreak, including the importance of checking immunisation status, the greater current risk of exposure and the benefits of vaccination. These are consistent with the messages from the Immunisation Advisory Centre and the Auckland Regional Public Health service.

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 Officer
Counties Manukau Health