

Clinical : COVID-19 Response Preparedness  
Proactive release: 22 May 2020

07 May 2020

9(2)(a)

Email: 9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

### Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, received by us on 16 March 2020. You noted the following and requested the following information in your initial media request.

*I'm writing on behalf of Stuff with a number of questions about your DHB's capacity to deal with COVID-19. These questions are going to all DHBs. While an answer to all of them would be preferable, please feel free to ring me if you are able to get some of the data easily but are having trouble with the other questions. Our deadline is 5pm Tuesday [17 March 2020].*

*Stuff believes this information is strongly in the public interest at the present moment. As such we believe treating it as an Official Information Act request would be unnecessary, we will be noting which DHBs were not able to get back to us, and would appreciate comment on why the information was not to-hand.*

*I'm aware you will all have had a request from my colleague Hannah Martin on COVID-19 preparedness. This is a separate request although I appreciate there may be some crossover - hopefully that makes responding somewhat easier.*

1. *How many hospital beds are in your DHB?*
2. *How many beds are currently available?*
3. *How many ICU beds are in your DHB?*
4. *How many ICU beds are available?*
5. *How many negative pressure isolation rooms do you have?*
6. *How many ventilators do you have?*
7. *How many non-invasive ventilation machines?*
8. *How many ventilators are in-use?*
9. **Are any more ventilators being ordered in? If so, how many, and roughly how much do they cost per-unit?**
10. *How many ICU consultants do you have on staff?*
11. *How many respiratory physicians do you have on staff?*
12. *How many general medicine physicians?*
13. *How many anaesthetists do you have on staff?*
14. *How many anaesthetic registrars do we have able to intubate a patient?*

A statement in response to your interest in these matters was provided to you on behalf of the Northern Regional District Health Boards on 17 March 2020. On the same date, we (CM Health) advised you that we could provide some further information, pending your advice.

On 19 March, we followed-up to confirm whether you remained interested in the information after your initial deadline had passed (noted above).

On 09 April, you responded and advised:

- **I'd appreciate a response specifically on those questions of whether ventilators are being ordered in, and the cost, but the rest [of the request] can be dropped**

Thank you for your patience in regard to this response, as we worked to manage the impact of national alert levels on our operational capacity.

As a part response to your question, we make the following comments.

As context, Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 569,400 people). Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient/ ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services (for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services), with several specialist services provided via other metro Auckland DHBs, including tertiary surgical/ medical services, some specialist paediatrics, and mental health and addiction services.

CM Health usually resources (equips, and staffs) an 18-bed Critical Care Unit, comprising 12-bed intensive care, and 6-bed high dependency unit. At this time, we have increased this to a 25-bed capacity. We carefully manage all our critical care level capacity - locally, regionally and nationally, to provide care for both the current response to COVID-19 cases, and for other patients needing this level of care. In any illness, the decision to ventilate someone is a clinical and family decision and not everybody who gets COVID-19 will be ventilated.

We have 83 non-invasive ventilators across our hospital services, and 62 devices classified as invasive ventilators (of this number, approx. half are usually used in theatres during surgical cases).

We continue to work locally and regionally to review our anticipated response needs, and are working with suppliers to increase our medical devices (including ventilator) stocks – the specific costs of these items will depend on specifications and contractual agreements. We are also completing additional training of staff to support care of those requiring ventilators, and making space to accommodate any new equipment requirements.

We acknowledge the high public interest in this topic at this time, however, current commercial procurement is progressing, and it is not appropriate for us to comment further as to costs and commitments at this time.

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 flourish above the name.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Counties Manukau Health**