

10th February 2022



Official Information Act Request for – Cancer Misdiagnosis

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 14th January 2022, you requested the following information:

- 1. How many people had a cancer misdiagnosis in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?**
- 2. How many people had a delayed diagnosis of cancer in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?**

Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

- 1. How many people had a cancer misdiagnosis in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?**
- 2. How many people had a delayed diagnosis of cancer in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?**

The information you are seeking is not held in a way that is easily accessible as potential late or misdiagnosis of cancer is not coded in our systems. There are a number of different ways this information is recorded and it would require a substantial amount of research across multiple systems and DHBs to, source all of the information and then undertake a clinical review of relevant individual patient records to confirm that a clinical misdiagnosis had taken place.

In addition to the above, patients enter our hospital system through any number of services or as outpatients and may then be referred to Auckland DHB for treatment and specialities that are not provided by us.

Due to the sensitivity of the information, it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would require our clinical staff to review individual clinical files, which

would take them away from their frontline work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services. We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to decline this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

I trust this information answers your request. You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Watson', followed by a small blue dot.

Dr Peter Watson
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health