

19<sup>th</sup> February 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Official Information Act Request for – Sterilised Equipment**

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021, you requested the following information:

- **“I would like a detailed breakdown of any and all incidents relating to equipment not being properly sterilised by the District Health Board from March 2020.**
- **Please clarify if the lack of sterilisation was picked up before or after patient exposure.”**

### **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.

- **“I would like a detailed breakdown of any and all incidents relating to equipment not being properly sterilised by the District Health Board from March 2020.**
- **Please clarify if the lack of sterilisation was picked up before or after patient exposure.”**

The below information reflects the date range of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The number of incidents should be considered in the context of the number of surgical packs processed (sterilised) at CM health per year. The total number of load items for the period of time requested was 275,583, reflecting an error rate of 0.038% (for context, between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 CM Health surgical facilities delivered approximately 26,500 procedures).

- Foreign bodies identified in equipment sets (Foreign Bodies includes, hair, bone, blood, tape and other unknown/unidentified items) – 74 incidents.
- Packaging incidents (such as holes in guards, water in equipment sets, or no indicators in equipment sets) – 31 incidents.

Importantly in all these events, all the items/faults were identified by CSSD or Operating Theatre staff before the equipment was used in any surgical procedure. The items were removed, cleaned and sterilised/re-processed and checked before being used for a surgical procedure.

We are confident our current processes, in line with AS/NZS 4187:2014 – *Standards for reprocessing of reusable medical devices in health service organisations*, are robust and safe.

We have robust checking processes in place in all CSSD and in Operating Theatres, to identify any such breaches before a surgery commences, and we encourage all staff to complete Incident Forms when sterile items are identified as compromised, so that this is investigated and improvement processes can be completed.

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](http://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



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