

22nd October 2020

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request for – Occupancy & Clinical Workforce

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 22nd September 2020, you requested the following information:

“I'm writing a story looking at how the country's clinical workforces are being deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Could you please tell me, week on week, for the last six months, what your respective DHB's hospital bed occupancy rates have been?

COVID-19 alert level restrictions have also had an impact on lowering seasonal influenza contraction and therefore hospitalisation rates, which in some cases, means hospital wards are less busy.

To this point, where has your DHB's clinical workforce, especially ward staff, when under-utilised, been redeployed to?”

Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 7,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 569,400 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.

- **Could you please tell me, week on week, for the last six months, what your respective DHB's hospital bed occupancy rates have been?**

Counties Manukau Health monitors in real-time the demand for hospital beds and capacity across the entire system, with a focus on maintaining availability and flow through the hospital, via our Middlemore Central operations centre. We manage staffing levels proactively to match clinical needs, safe skill mix and use of additional resources as required.

There is variation from average occupancy rate on an hourly, daily and seasonal basis, and for different clinical areas. The occupancy rate in figure 1 below is calculated as the number of patients under Medical, Surgical, Adult Rehabilitation Health of Older People (ARHOP), Kidz First, Women’s Health and Mental Health services in an inpatient bed at 0700 hours divided by the number of beds open in these areas at 0700 hours. We have also included the Emergency Department request rate at that time.

As you will be aware, Covid-19 National Alert levels were put in place from 25th March 2020 onwards.

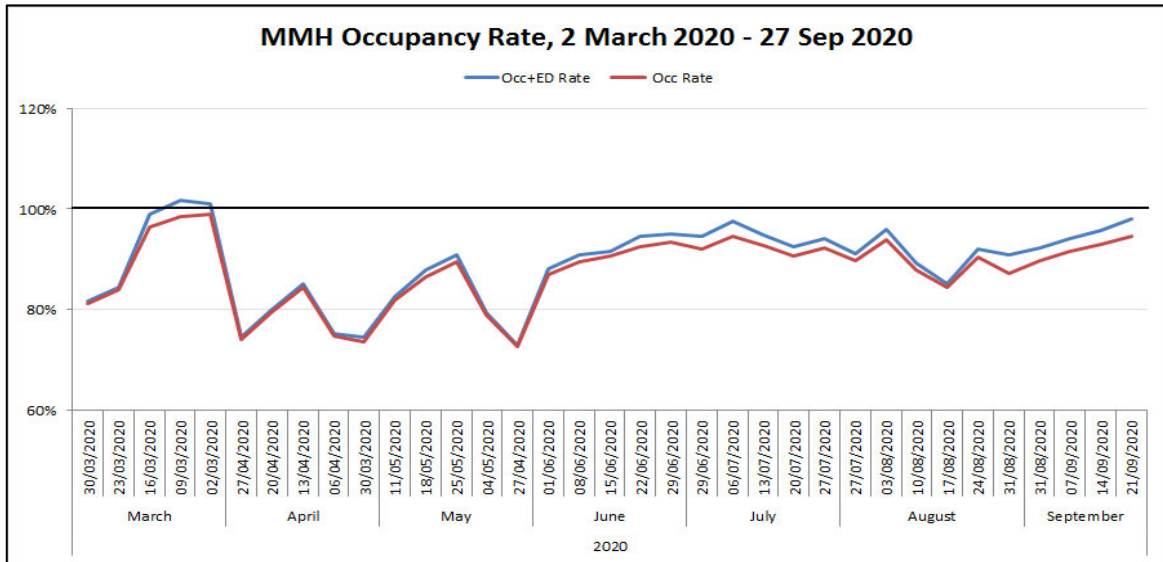


Figure 1: Data Sourced CapPlan (12.10.2020)

The hospital occupancy data in figure 1 includes a number of specialist clinical areas (such as Women’s Health, Paediatrics and Mental Health facilities). These areas have different clinical parameters and occupancy requirements to ‘typical wards’ and this inclusion can appear to inflate available occupancy for acute patients. Figure 2 below reflects the number of patients under Medical, Surgical and ARHOP specialities (acute ward areas) in an inpatient bed at 0700 hours divided by the number of beds open in these areas at 0700 hours. Again, we have included the Emergency Department request rate at that time.

Again, as you will be aware Covid-19 National Alert levels were put in place from 25th March 2020 onwards.

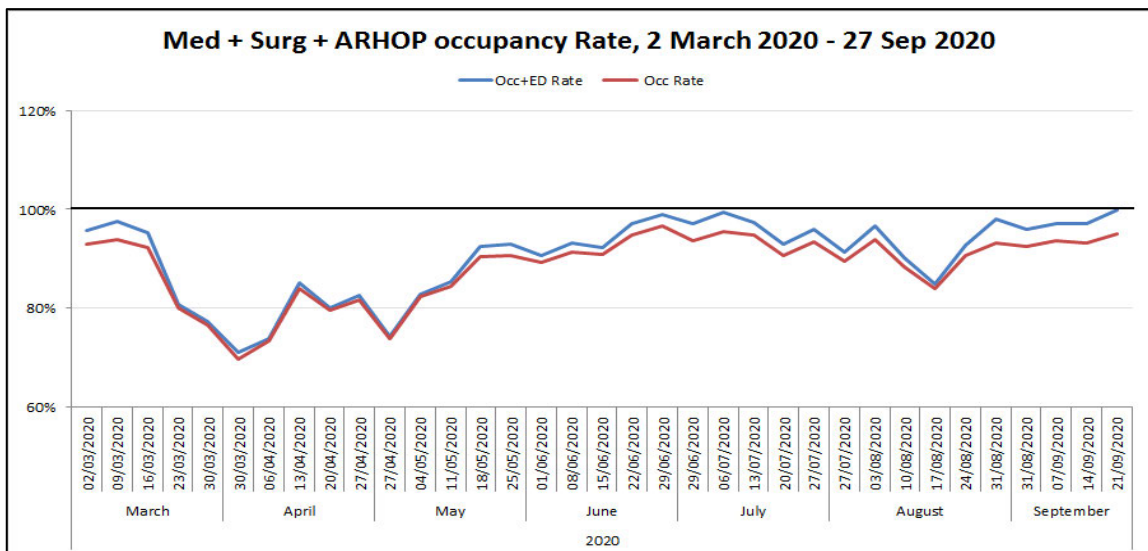


Figure 2: Data Sourced CapPlan (12.10.2020)

- **COVID-19 alert level restrictions have also had an impact on lowering seasonal influenza contraction and therefore hospitalisation rates, which in some cases, means hospital wards are less busy. To this point, where has your DHB's clinical workforce, especially ward staff, when under-utilised, been redeployed to?**

Any moderate occupancy levels across the organisation enables us to reduce the use of casual or bureau staff.

Manukau Health Park reduced services during Covid-19 national alert levels as required. Clinical staff worked onsite at Manukau Health Park, worked from home or were redeployed as per our standard redeployment policy to Middlemore Hospital, either in the wards or supported the hospital response to Covid-19.

I trust that this information is helpful. 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



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health