



15 July 2021

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Winter volumes in Waitematā DHB Emergency Departments

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 2 July 2021 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about the number of people waiting to be transferred from an ambulance to an Emergency Department (ED) and how ED presentations compare this winter to previous years.

You requested the following information:

I am looking to find out whether ambulances had found delays when handing people over to A and E (Accident and Emergency) so far this winter.

I was hoping to find out:

- 1. How frequently people are waiting more than 15 minutes to be handed over to A and E from the ambulance?***
- 2. How does this winter compare to the previous three years?***

On 5 July, we advised that the information relating to ambulance transfers to our EDs is not held by us but may be held by St John Ambulance. However, we advised we could provide data for presentations to EDs in June 2019, 2020 and 2021 by hospital (North Shore and Waitakere).

That same day, you confirmed that you would be happy for us to provide that information.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services. Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,500 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

Presentations to Waitematā DHB EDs in winter for the previous three years at North Shore and Waitakere hospitals.

As your original request sought information on winter demand, we have provided data for the number of presentations to North Shore and Waitakere hospitals' EDs from May to August of 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 to give a fuller picture of trends through this part of each year. Please note that in 2020, we experienced a reduction in presentations to our EDs due to community cases of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown periods in Auckland.

Hospital	Year	May	June	July	August
North Shore	2018	6,086	5,955	6,051	6,383
	2019	6,092	5,878	6,272	6,194
	2020	5,107	5,791	5,940	5,515
	2021	6,375	6,394	-	-
Waitakere	2018	4,663	4,747	5,144	5,546
	2019	5,259	5,307	5,312	5,060
	2020	3,233	4,035	4,218	4,089
	2021	5,061	5,698	-	-

This year, we have seen high numbers of ED presentations at both North Shore and Waitakere hospitals, including an increase in Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)-type conditions.

Winter demand for care is high across metro Auckland, which is normal for this time of year. However, these presentations are higher than our usual seasonal fluctuations for the winter period.

To ensure care is provided within an appropriate timeframe, priority is given to patients who present with clinical urgency. Patients with lower-acuity health concerns are encouraged to consider other options, such as visiting their GP, pharmacy or nearest accident and medical clinic, which preserves our ability to quickly assist those who do need emergency care.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely




Executive Director Hospital Services
Waitematā District Health Board