



24 March 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request

The Ministry of Health transferred part of your Official Information Act request about ICU beds to Northland DHB on 25 February 2022.

Data on how many ICU beds NZ had as at 1.1.2020 and again ICU beds in NZ as at 18.1.2022. I would like this data to include bed numbers that can actually be used vs allocated beds that cannot be staffed

Whangarei Hospital's ICU has 10 physical bed spaces, however our standard capacity is considered as eight beds. Of these bed spaces five are individual negative pressure rooms.

Our standard nursing roster includes four Registered Nurses providing direct patient care and a fifth as Nurse Coordinator providing ICU coordination, oversight and support across the shift. In addition, weekday daytime shifts are also supported by a senior nursing team which includes a Clinical Nurse Manager, Associate Clinical Nurse Manager and a Nurse Educator. In times of variance response the nurse coordinator and senior nursing team would also take a patient load. Exact ICU capacity changes daily; the number of resourced beds flexes each day based on demand and staffing alongside patient need and complexity.

The number of "resourced" beds is determined by the case mix as the nurse to patient ratio will change. Using the standard roster pattern, before variance response or introduction of surge workforce, nursing care is available for the provision of four ICU patients (adult or paediatric cases). Noting however that a number of patients admitted to ICU are more accurately described as HDU patients, therefore lowering the amount of direct nursing resource required and increasing the number of "resourced" beds.

At 1 January 2020 there were eight physical beds and staffing to care for four ICU/ventilated patients. On 18 January 2022 there were eight physical ICU beds and staffing to care for three ICU/ventilated patients. Northland DHB has vacancies for ICU level nursing staff, and we are actively recruiting to fill these positions.

Budgeted (allocated beds) & resourced (staffed) ICU beds for each day 1 January 2021 – 30 Jun 2021.

Northland DHB is unable to supply the information requested as we do not record this data in a single electronic data system. In order to obtain the information a manual review of records is required. I have therefore decided to decline your request in accordance with section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information is not available without substantial collation and research. You have a right to complain to the Ombudsman about my decision to decline your request.

Northland DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist public understanding of how we deliver our services. This includes proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been provided to you. Personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be publicly available we will consider your views.

If you have any queries about Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nick Chamberlain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Nick Chamberlain
Chief Executive