



29 March 2021

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request

You have asked for information about nitrous oxide (also known as NOS, Whippets, nangs and laughing gas).

Can you please provide the following information available under the Official Information Act:

- The number of people per month over the last 12 months who have been seen in your emergency department in relation to the use of nitrous oxide.*
- The number of people per month over the last 12 months who have been admitted to hospital as a result of the use of nitrous oxide.*
- The age of people per month over the last 12 months who have been seen in your emergency department in relation to the use of nitrous oxide.*
- The gender of the people per month over the last 12 months who have been seen in your emergency department in relation to the use of nitrous oxide.*
- The ethnicity of people per month over the last 12 months who have been seen in your emergency department in relation to the use of nitrous oxide.*

Following submission of your information request you subsequently asked that the timeframe for the relevant patient presentations be extended to 2 years.

Northland DHB is unable to provide you with the information you have requested. Our patient coding system does not have a specific code for suspected nitrous oxide use. There are a number of possible codes that may be used depending on the patient's individual circumstances and presenting factors. In order to provide the information requested a manual review of individual patient medical records identified with those codes is necessary. This task would need to be undertaken by a clinician, require substantial collation and research and would necessarily take the clinician away from their primary responsibilities of caring for patients. Your request is therefore refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. You have a right to complain to the Ombudsman about this decision.

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 questions regarding Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact Northland DHB's Communications Manager, in the first instance at communications@northlanddhb.org.nz.

Yours sincerely

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

Dr Nick Chamberlain
Chief Executive