



West Coast District Health Board

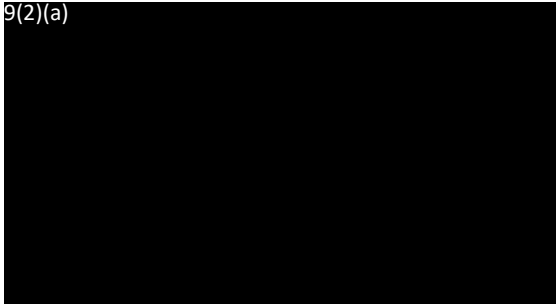
Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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8 September 2021

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RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9587

I refer to your email dated 12 August 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB regarding PPE stock and readiness for another Covid outbreak. Specifically:

- 1. How much stock of PPE does each DHB currently hold? And is it enough if NZ is suddenly hit with another Covid outbreak? Does each department have adequate supply?**
- 2. How frequently is PPE stock topped up? And how is extra PPE stock ordered? (i.e is it via a request to the MoH or independently sought?)**
- 3. When is the next order of PPE due?**
- 4. Has the DHB experienced any issues/ delays with ensuring PPE stock levels are sufficient?**

West Coast DHB supply of PPE has been procured through Canterbury DHB, through a central reserve ordering system. As evidenced by the current Covid-19 Delta variant outbreak, Canterbury DHB currently holds adequate PPE supplies to provide for both Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB.

We are supplied with stock from the Ministry of Health's central reserves, with each of our departments having access to PPE stock from the DHB's central warehouse. Individual DHB departmental PPE stock, and PPE stock for our key service provider agencies who are delivering health care in the community, is topped up as and when required based on the usage across the DHB region. When extra stock is required to replenish the DHB's supply warehouse, it is ordered from the Ministry of Health's central reserves via an online portal. This generally occurs on a weekly basis; but able to be requisitioned more frequently as required.

Rest homes in our region are able to order stock of PPE from the central warehouse – but our Emergency Operations Centre team are in regular daily contract with these facilities to ensure that they also have sufficient access to stock to support their ongoing care for their residents, with back-up able to be supplied directly from the DHB stocks if required

We have not experienced any issues in regard to ensuring our PPE stock levels are sufficient. There have been no hold ups experiences in securing PPE stock required or requested. We are confident we would continue to have access to adequate supplies in the event that a Covid-19 outbreak should spread to our community.

5. What specific health and safety measures does each DHB have in place if NZ is hit with another outbreak tomorrow?

As evidenced by the current Covid-19 Delta variant outbreak, significant depth of experience and knowledge is available from a collaborative team of subject matter experts across the West Coast Health System. Our systems are supported by our West Coast DHB laboratory and Canterbury Health Laboratories, our Infection Prevention and Control service, Community and Public Health, and with additional support available from Canterbury DHB's Department of Infectious Diseases. Together, these services provide strategic and operational input on infection prevention and control for our hospital and Specialist Services Primary Care, Aged Residential and Long Term Care facilities and Disability sector.

As part of earlier preparation for a further Covid-19 outbreak event, our Emergency Response planning for the DHB put measures in place that established:

- The WCDHB has infection and prevention control procedures in place as part of our Pandemic Outbreak Coordination response plan. This plan outlines how the whole of West Coast health system will:
 - Coordinate a response to any infection disease outbreak.
 - Provide guidance for health services around Infection and Prevention and Control measures, including correct PPE
 - Defines how and when we will reduce nonessential services during an outbreak and redeploy medical and nursing staff to support the outbreak response
- The WCDHB has been running FIT testing for our staff to ensure they are able to correctly put on and take of surgical masks and PPE.
- Non-essential staff are required to work from home (as per Alert Level requirements)

Further strategic oversight in respect of safety, health and welfare of DHB staff and those of other agencies engaged in our DHB's Covid response is provided through our DHB Emergency Operations Centre, linking with regional and national networks and Ministry of Health directives as required, in response to daily situational changes and developments.

6. Is the DHB confident that if NZ was hit with another Covid outbreak tomorrow it would be ready?

The West Coast health system is well placed to actively manage any cases of Covid-19 that may be confirmed in the region. We operate as an integrated health system and communicate frequently with our primary care colleagues who know what to do if a suspected case was to contact or arrive at their practice.

A West Coast Health COVID-19 Strategic Resurgence Plan (now activated) that has been developed by the West Coast DHB with input from key stakeholders and other emergency services around how our DHB will respond to Covid outbreak on the West Coast. This Plan outlines our surge activation planning for services, including how we will operate at the various Alert levels and ensure our staff health and safety and wellbeing during a Covid response. This Plan works in conjunction with our Pandemic Outbreak Coordination response plan.

With the current national Covid resurgence situation, we are operating within that Plan framework at present and the associated functions are working well. The West Coast DHB is actively working with our partner health providers and with Police, St John, Fire and Emergency, and Civil Defence Emergency Management as part of the wider regional response, with our Emergency Coordination Centre having been activated to support the wider coordination.

7. What has the DHB done to increase ICU capacity?

West Coast DHB does not operate an Intensive Care Unit such as operated by tertiary level care centres. West Coast DHB operates four Critical Care Unit beds (which serve as our *de facto* intensive care beds); all located at Te Nikau Grey Hospital in Greymouth. The physical configuration of the ward that these beds are located in allow us the potential to expand our Critical Care capacity through repurposing should this be required for any Covid response need that may emerge.

8. Yesterday (11/08/2021), Ashley Bloomfield said there was now a well-developed ICU network across the country, but sources have told me that's not the case and nothing has changed except for converting ICU beds for pandemic which doesn't increase capacity - and the only new staff being trained are to replace staff that have left. Is this true?

Flexibility in being able to convert existing bed space use and to share resources does increase the capacity for pandemic response for those times when it is needed. West Coast DHB is actively engaged along with other DHBs in the national network that reviews ICU bed capacity and availability around New Zealand on a daily basis to be able to contribute to providing additional support if required. To date, there have been no requests for our facilities to take people from other areas due to Covid-19.

Following the first Covid outbreak a number of staff put themselves through the foundation course for ICU in preparation for another outbreak. Staff training to prepare for Covid-19 resurgence has been ongoing.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely



Tracey Maisey
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support