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31 March 2022

9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act (OIA) request CDHB 10839 & WCDHB 9677

I refer to your email dated 27 February 2022 to the Ministry of Health which they subsequently transferred to us on 22 March 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB and West Coast DHB regarding Covid admissions. Specifically:

1. Please indicate what is your exact procedure for determining that hospital admissions in this current time are in fact directly due to covid.
 - a. i.e: are you testing people who are admitting themselves for something non respiratory related and if they test positive after admission for sars cov 2 are you listing it as a covid admission regardless
 - b. i.e: people who are admitted for something respiratory related that is later diagnosed as not sars cov 2, are you indicating them as covid hospitalizations if they return a positive test during admission.

All hospital admissions are routinely tested by PCR for COVID.

Adults and children in whom the presentation is most likely related to COVID are counted as being COVID related. All others are counted as having incidental COVID infection. It is imprecise given the varying non-respiratory types of illness with COVID – e.g. fever and delirium, gastrointestinal symptoms. However, the attribution as COVID related, or not, is thought to be broadly accurate.

West Coast DHB clinicians are following the Canterbury DHB protocols as per the Ministry of Health (Technical Advisory Group). <https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/leadership-ministry/expert-groups/covid-19-vaccine-technical-advisory-group-cv-tag>

Note: This was correct as at the time of the OIA being lodged, and subject to any subsequent change in policy and practice that may arise based on clinical advice and best practice.

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 Canterbury DHB website and West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

Ralph La Salle
Senior Manager, OIAs
Canterbury DHB & West Coast DHB