

24 FEB 2020

[REDACTED]
Ref: H202000306

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 24 January 2020 for information on the 2019 National Measles Outbreak. A copy of your full request and information in response to your questions is outlined in Appendix 1 of this letter.

I trust that this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry of Health website.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Woodley
**Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention**

Appendix 1

| # | Requested info | Response | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---------|--------|------------------|--------|-----|---------------------|----------------|------------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------|------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | <i>How many people were vaccinated for measles since the outbreak?</i> | We cannot state the number of people vaccinated since the outbreak, however a total of 222,195 people received the MMR ¹ vaccine in 2019 as compared to 129,858 people vaccinated in 2018. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | <i>What group saw lowest vaccination (age, race, gender, location)</i> | Please refer to Table 1 below for this information. Table 1. Summary of MMR vaccinations during 2019 (1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | <i>What group saw highest vaccinations (age, race, gender, location)?</i> | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Highest</th> <th>Lowest</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Age group</td> <td>0 to 4</td> <td>85+</td> </tr> <tr> <td>144,728 individuals</td> <td>12 individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Ethnicity</td> <td>European</td> <td>Other²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>99,014 individuals</td> <td>5,808 individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Gender</td> <td>Female</td> <td>Male</td> </tr> <tr> <td>115,574 individuals</td> <td>106,621 individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">District health board (DHB)</td> <td>Counties Manukau</td> <td>West Coast</td> </tr> <tr> <td>41,732 individuals</td> <td>776 individuals</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | Highest | Lowest | Age group | 0 to 4 | 85+ | 144,728 individuals | 12 individuals | Ethnicity | European | Other ² | 99,014 individuals | 5,808 individuals | Gender | Female | Male | 115,574 individuals | 106,621 individuals | District health board (DHB) | Counties Manukau | West Coast | 41,732 individuals | 776 individuals |
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| 4 | <i>What control methods were used and how were different areas treated from one another?</i> | <p>The 2019 measles outbreak is the largest in New Zealand since 1997³. From 1 January 2019 to 7 February 2020, there have been 2,195 confirmed cases of measles notified nationally. Most of these cases have been in the Auckland region.</p> <p>In response to the outbreak, the Ministry activated the National Health Coordination Centre (NHCC) to manage the national response to the outbreak.</p> <p>The DHBs with active measles cases have put in place several strategies to control the spread of measles and</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

¹ Measles, mumps and rubella vaccine

² Included individuals from Southern America, the Middle East and Africa

³ 2,169 confirmed cases in 1997

| # Requested info | Response |
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| | <p>to increase the population's immunity against the disease.</p> <p>As an example, to increase the local population's immunity against measles, the three DHBs in the Auckland region have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lowered the age of the first MMR vaccine from age 15 months to 12 months; • conducted active recall of children who have not been vaccinated; • increased use of opportunistic vaccination; • held outreach services and drop-in clinics in a range of location and times including in schools, shopping centres and Super Clinics. <p>For more information about these intervention strategies, you may wish to visit the Counties Manukau Health page at the following address: https://countiesmanukau.health.nz/for-patients-and-visitors/measles/.</p> <p>Additionally, the Communicable Disease Control Manual provides national protocols that describe the standard practice public health services would normally follow in the prevention and control of notifiable communicable diseases. A copy of this document is available on the Ministry website at the following address: https://health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual.</p> <p>The last confirmed case of measles was reported on 7 February 2020. The Ministry provides regular updates on the outbreak on its website: https://health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles/2019-20-measles-outbreak-information.</p> |
| <p>5 <i>What was the most effective tool or reason for the heavy reduction in measles cases? Why did measles cases drop so drastically, so quickly</i></p> | <p>The significant reduction in confirmed measles cases can be attributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increased uptake of measles vaccinations due to the public becoming more aware of the illness; • the continuation of the National Childhood Immunisation schedule; and • public health measles containment strategies implemented by the DHBs with active measles cases including, but not limited to, isolation of confirmed cases, active contact tracing, and appropriate prophylactic treatment of close contacts. |

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| 6 | <i>Why did measles cases drop so drastically, so quickly?</i> | <p>The reduction in case numbers is most likely a result of reduced exposure of the disease to susceptible people (ie, those who are unimmunised or have not previously been exposed to the disease). This is why increased immunisation rates and public health containment strategies are implemented in response to outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases such as measles.</p> <p>For your information, the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) publishes weekly surveillance reports which summarise confirmed measles notifications for a particular week: https://surv.esr.cri.nz/surveillance/WeeklyMeaslesRpt.php?we_objectID=5088.</p> |