

11 October 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2022012814

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 16 September 2022 for information regarding medicinal cannabis. You asked:

*“How many prescriptions for medicinal cannabis have been made since the law change in April 2020?
From these figures - a breakdown by month and region of NZ
A breakdown of product type prescribed - and strength
A breakdown of the health issues used to treat”*

Sativex is the only medicinal cannabis product that has consent for distribution as a medicine in New Zealand. Other medicinal cannabis products that have been verified as meeting the minimum quality standard for medicinal cannabis may be prescribed under the exemption provisions in section 29 of the Medicines Act 1981. Information on prescribing is not held by the Medicinal Cannabis Agency, Medsafe or Manatū Hauora and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act. As such your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act.

Medsafe has previously released information on the number of packs of medicinal cannabis products that have been reported as supplied under the exemption provisions in section 29 of the Medicines Act. A previous OIA response where this information has been released is available here: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/information-release/h202206795_response.pdf.

When considering these data, it is important to note:

- That the number of packs supplied cannot be used to determine the number of prescriptions or the number of patients.
- Reporting information is supplied retrospectively and therefore the number of packs reported as supplied in this response is accurate at the time of preparing the response but may change if additional reports are received.
- Sativex has consent for distribution as a medicine, and so supply of Sativex is not included in the figures supplied. Information on the supply of Sativex is not held by either Manatū Hauora or Medsafe.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Marnane".

Catherine Marnane
Acting Group Manager
Medsafe