

Kia ora koutou

Thank you for all your effort to date in continuing to provide a high level of service and responsiveness during the country's response to COVID-19.

Further to my previous emails to clarify the Ministry's expectations for DHBs when sharing data during the response, I wanted to also reassure you that the Ministry of Health processes for sharing identifiable information regarding COVID-19 cases with relevant response agencies are robust.

A range of processes have been put in place to ensure privacy is protected at this time, including:

- providing specific guidance to emergency services organisations on the Ministry's expectations for the treatment of identifiable data
- the establishment of a Ministry of Health Data and Information-Sharing Governance Group for COVID-19. Requests for data are escalated to this Governance Group where a decision by a responsible manager is unable to be reached
- development of COVID-19 specific guidance for internal Ministry processes for sharing information, including ensuring extensive and accurate documentation is kept of all assessment and decisions made regarding requests for data.

I have attached a set of guidelines developed by our legal team that outline the obligations of people in receipt of identifiable health data. These guidelines have been shared with emergency services organisations and may also be useful for your staff.

Our collective effort to continue to protect the privacy of individuals' data and personal details will be critical to maintaining the public's confidence in our response to the threat of COVID-19, and the ability to share information between response agencies securely and with confidence.

If specific concerns arise regarding the privacy of patient information and data sharing, please continue to address these to healthlegalexecutiveassistant@health.govt.nz and guidance will be provided.

Thank you again for your hard work in responding to the needs of New Zealanders during this time of unprecedented rapid change in the way we all work.

[attachment]

He waka e noa.

Ngā mihi,

Jane Kelley

Director Health Systems, COVID-19 Response

Ministry of Health