

12 August 2024

Tēnā koe

Your Official Information Act request, ref: HNZ00045948

Thank you for your email received on 30 April 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- '1. All daily "shifts below Target" measure data for every shift and for every hospital ward from 1st January 2024 – Most recently available data for 2024. If there are delays in responding to this request, please include the most up to date information at the time the request is fulfilled.*
- 2. The Total numbers of "Shifts below Target" reported for 2024 by district.*
- 3. All documentation, briefings, and reports related to how Te Whatu Ora is collecting, analysing and responding to "shifts below Target" and the CCDM programme.'*

Response

I apologise for the delay in providing our response. The time taken is not what we aspire to. This is something we are working to get on top of as we deal with a high volume of requests and the understandably high public interest in our work. Patient safety and outcomes, coupled with staff wellbeing, remain fundamental for Health New Zealand.

There are now more nurses employed by hospitals than ever before, with 29,404 full time equivalent (FTE) nurses employed by Health NZ across the country. That's an additional 1,198 compared to last quarter, and an overall increase of 2,900 over the last year. A shortfall in nursing staff remains an issue in several speciality areas, such as mental health, and we are working to address this. Staffing levels also tend to come under pressure during the winter months with higher levels of sickness with seasonal illness.

Health NZ is refusing your request under section 9(2)(j) of the Act. to enable Health NZ to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations). Where information is withheld under section 9 of the Act, I have considered the countervailing public interest in release in making this decision and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

However, we can provide you with some information we think may be useful to you. Please see the enclosed Appendix 1 chart, which shows nursing staffing levels nationally over the past several years. For any given shift, there is a target range based on an estimate of patient need and the staffing required. The chart shows the variation in over time, with staffing levels at times above or below the target range. You can see that there is a steady improvement meeting staffing targets (the green line).

In a busy hospital environment, the management of staff to best meet acute flow and patient needs requires flexibility and expertise with decision making from our experienced leaders on the frontline. They use variance response management (VRM) systems to support decisions on

moving staff resources to patient areas in greatest need. We are continuing our work to improve these systems and our ability to respond to patients' needs and make best possible use of our highly skilled staff.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at [Ombudsman New Zealand | Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata](#) or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Nadine Gray
National Chief Nursing Officer
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer