

27 January 2022



**Re: Official Information Act request – Addressing Violence and Aggression against Nurses (AVAN)**  
**ADHB Ref: 20211207-1111**

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 7 December 2021 requesting the following information:

1. The number of incidents related to nurses, midwives and health care assistants being abused, harassed or physically assaulted/ attacked at their workplace since 1 Jan 2017 to date, broken down by location and calendar year.
2. Brief description of the incidents and what the incidents related to e.g. verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual assault, physical threat or otherwise
3. How many 'code orange'\* events that occurred? Brief description of the events
4. Where did the incidents happen? e.g. the emergency department, mental health/addictions, obstetrics?
5. How many incidents were notified to WorkSafe?
6. How many incidents required police interventions e.g. Police report, statements from DHB employees?
7. How many incidents required an ACC claim?
8. How many incidents resulted in working days lost? And if so, how many?
9. How many 'code orange'\* events that occurred? Brief description of the events

We are happy to support the NZNO with this important piece of work. Unfortunately we do not have reporting that is able to report on all of these elements easily but we have tried to provide as much information as we can. We take the safety and wellbeing of patients, staff and visitors on our premises very seriously and do not tolerate assault or harassment in any form.

#### **Questions 1, 2, and 4**

Most of the information you have requested has been provided in Attachment 1. Nurses-Midwives-HCAs.xls'.

Note that:

- We have not been able to provide information for the period January 2017 to April 2017 because the only reliable data we could gather came from our Datix Incident Management System which was implemented in April 2017.
- We were unable to translate this information into the template you provided as it would take substantive collation, however we have supplied the information you have asked for in a different format.

### Question 3, 4 and 9

The information you have requested is in Attachment 2. All Code Orange from DATIX – Listing.xls.

The way we are able to capture this reporting doesn't make it easy to identify specifically the role of the persons impacted so the information provided relates to ALL Code Orange events for the period April 2017 to 5 January 2022 (i.e. includes events that did not involve nurses, midwives and health care assistants)

### Question 5

There were no notifications to WorkSafe relating specifically to workplace violence incidents for the period January 2017 to 2021 recorded.

### Question 6

We are unable to provide this information as we don't collect or hold it.

### Questions 7 and 8

The information you have requested is provided in the attached spreadsheet Attachment 3. Workplace Violence work injury claims 2017 – 2021.xls.

Note that the information recorded does not capture the role title/type of the persons impacted so the information provided here relates to ACC claims related to workplace violence for ALL roles including all DHB employees for the period January 2017 to December 2021.

In order to provide you with further context in terms of the information you have requested please note that we have sourced this information by applying Auckland DHB's official definitions as follows:

#### **"Abused, Harassed"**

**Harassment** – any type of unreasonable, unwelcome comment or behaviour which offends humiliates or intimidates the person it is directed at. It may be repeated or be a one-off incident which is significant enough to have a detrimental effect on the person's health and safety, employment, job performance or satisfaction. Harassment may also occur in person or through email and social media both inside and outside of the workplace or work time.

#### **"Physically assaulted/attacked, physical threat, sexual**

**Physical assault** - the intentional use of force by one person against another, without lawful justification, resulting in physical injury or personal discomfort.

assault”

“Verbally assaulted,  
verbal abuse”

**Non-physical assault** - The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress and/or constituting harassment.

The figures provided are based on incident reports in our system that match the definitions above.

To help manage risk around safety on our sites we have an incident management system to record incidents, including violence or abuse directed at another person whilst on our premises. The Datix Safety Management System was introduced in 2017. The introduction of this system and subsequent training and education associated with the implementation programme led to increased reporting - which we have encouraged. This accounts for the increase in numbers between 2017 and 2018. In addition, in 2019 we implemented an Occupational Violence (OV) Reader automated system in our Adult Emergency Department making reporting significantly easier for staff which also led to increased reporting. The installation of the OV readers, increased reporting and increased patient admissions during the stress of COVID account for the increase in numbers from 2019 onwards.

We have observed our patients, whānau and visitors exhibiting increased levels of anxiety and escalation and a number of mental health escalations over the past 20 months which have coincided with lockdowns.

Some of the specialised services we provide involve caring for vulnerable patients with sometimes challenging behaviours. Caution is needed when comparing these numbers between different DHBs unless it is clear the clinical caseload is of similar complexity.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours sincerely



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
**Chief Executive**

**Encl.**

1. Attachment 1. Nurses-Midwives-HCAs.xlsx
2. Attachment 2. All Code Orange from DATIX - Listing.xlsx
3. Attachment 3. Workplace Violence work injury claims 2017 - 2021.xlsx