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3 February 2022

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Re: Official Information Act request – Investment in ICU beds - ADHB Ref: 20211216-1125

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 18 November 2021 to the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the partial transfer (part 3) from the Ministry of Health to Auckland DHB on 16 December 2021 requesting the following information:

Part 3 What investment in the increased number of ICU beds by region and hospital, have been delivered, from 01 October 2019 to the date of your issuing the data.”

Response

I am responding on behalf of the Northern Region District Health Boards: Waitematā, Auckland, Counties Manukau and Northland DHBs. The Northern Region DHBs and the ICU services work together regionally to support each other and manage capacity across the region.

All Northern region DHBs have undertaken a systematic programme of work to improve ICU facilities including additional ventilation work to support the COVID response, however there has been no increase in physical ICU capacity across the Northern region since October 2019. DHBs have plans in place to use other clinical facilities should there be an increased demand for ICU capacity due to increased COVID hospitalisation demand.

Note that this response details the physical ICU beds available and does not identify the numbers of beds that are resourced and able to be staffed on a daily basis.

1. Auckland DHB

Auckland DHB currently has 65 physical ICU beds across adult and paediatric services. There has been no increase to the number of physical ICU beds for adults and paediatrics since October 2019 however construction will commence on additional paediatric ICU beds in 2022 as part of a \$40M expansion project.

2. Counties Manukau DHB

Counties Manukau currently has 25 physical critical care beds. There has been no increase in this capacity since October 2019 however we are exploring increasing Critical Care capacity in our Grow Middlemore project which will continue to be worked on in 2022. We have been able to increase our negative pressure room capacity by converting 5 Critical Care physical beds into negative pressure, this was from the Government's recent capital injection (this is included in the 25 beds).

3. Waitematā DHB

Waitematā DHB currently has 14 ICU bed spaces at North Shore Hospital. While there has been no increase in physical ICU capacity since October 2019, plans are in place for two additional isolation rooms created in the High Dependency Unit (HDU) with negative pressure capability. A negative pressure environment will also be created in an open area within the hospital's ICU/HDU facility.

These plans extend to the Elective Surgery Centre (on the North Shore Hospital campus) where eight isolation rooms with negative pressure capability will be added.

It is also commencing work on a building programme for a new Intensive Care Unit and a 30-bed inpatient ward to be built at Waitakere Hospital from the end of 2022. The ICU will include eight physical new beds, with six initially planned to be commissioned at the opening of the unit.

4. Northland DHB

Northland DHB has not increased the number of ICU beds within its facilities since October 2019. Whangarei Hospital has 10 physical beds. A regional plan is in place to support the transfer of ICU patients to Auckland metropolitan region should this be required to support COVID or non COVID demand. In addition, Northland DHB has local plans to use alternative facilities should additional physical ICU capacity be required locally.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Dotchin". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Margaret" and the last name "Dotchin" clearly legible. There is a small flourish at the end of the signature.

Margaret Dotchin
Acting Chief Executive