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30 May 2024

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2024041379

Tēnā koe

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 13 May 2024 for information regarding the National Health Emergency Plan H5N1 Pre-Pandemic Vaccine Usage Policy. A response to each part of your request is provided below:

Could you kindly provide an update on the current version or any revisions made to the National Health Emergency Plan H5N1 Pre-Pandemic Vaccine Usage Policy since its last revision in 2013? Additionally, I would appreciate a copy of the latest version or any recent amendments to this policy document.

There has not been an update to the *National Health Emergency Plan H5N1 Pre-Pandemic Vaccine Usage Policy* since 2013. The Ministry intends to update this policy by June 2025.

Furthermore, I am interested in understanding if New Zealand currently possesses any H5N1 vaccines in storage. If so, could you please specify the quantity of vaccines held, along with details regarding the manufacturer and brand name? Conversely, if there are no H5N1 vaccines currently in storage, I would like to inquire whether there are any intentions or plans to procure such vaccines. If there are plans for procurement, I would appreciate information on the estimated quantity needed to adequately address the potential pandemic threat posed by H5N1, considering New Zealand's population size.

New Zealand currently holds a stockpile of 150,000 courses of pre-pandemic influenza vaccine. I am unable to provide you with details of the manufacturer and brand name due to commercial and national security sensitivities that preclude us from providing more specific information about the stocks held. Any further detail is withheld under sections 6(a) and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act. 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.

Additionally, I am interested in learning about the funding allocated specifically to address the potential pandemic threat posed by H5N1. Could you please provide details regarding any dedicated funding or budgetary provisions aimed at preparedness measures, including vaccine procurement, stockpiling, and other related initiatives?

New Zealand maintains a strategic national reserve supply of critical items. There is dedicated funding to maintain supplies held as part of the national reserve supply. These supplies exist to

ensure health services have access to critical items during large or prolonged emergencies that generate unusual demands on normal health service stocks or supply chains. This includes supplies to respond to an influenza pandemic and covers the purchase of pre-pandemic influenza vaccine.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

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 Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ross Bell', is positioned above the typed name and title.

Ross Bell
Acting Deputy Director-General
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui