

15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

[REDACTED]  
**The Spinoff**

**Email:** [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**Official Information Act Request for – Impact due to medicine and device supply issues**

I write in response to your request under the Official Information Act received on 28 July 2020, and your subsequent email of 20 August 2020, for the following information. I apologise for the delay in submitting the requested information.

**Clarification Response 20 August 2020**

Information in relation to COVID-19-impacted shortages and so the timeframe would be just from January 2020 till August 2020

**OIA Request 28 July 2020**

1. All correspondence and documents that reviewed or provided advice about whether there is a shortage or no stock of the following list of medicines (see list below) at Counties Manukau District Health Board's hospitals.
2. All correspondence and documents that reviewed or provided advice about how Counties Manukau DHB will be managing treatment for those who require medicines that are in short supply or where there is no stock.

The following medicines and devices have been listed by Pharmac as having supply issues.

- Acarbose (Glucobay)
- Apotex
- Benzbromarone
- Cephalexin
- Chlorhexidine
- Clomipramine
- Fentanyl injections
- Fluoxetine
- Gemfibrozil discontinuation
- Labetalol injection
- Levodopa with carbidopa (Sinemet)
- Levomepromazine (Nozinan)
- Montelukast
- Morphine sulphate tablets
- Nitrazepam (discontinuation)

- Oral contraceptives
- Paracetamol
- Prochlorperazine (Buccastem)
- Propofol
- Pulmocare oral feed 1.5kcal/ml
- Ranitidine
- Suxamethonium
- Ultraproct

### **Counties Manukau Health Response**

Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) acknowledges that COVID-19 may have had an impact on the manufacture of medicines and medicines supply chains globally which could have resulted in shortages of some medicines in New Zealand during the period specified (January 2020 – August 2020). A summary of the medicines listed in your request, and our understanding regarding supply issues is attached as *Appendix A*.

CM Health took a proactive approach working with clinicians to safely manage medicine stock issues to ensure we did not run out of stock of critical medicines. For context, medicine stock fluctuations in New Zealand are not uncommon and depend on a number of factors outside of the DHB control. As part of our operational business as usual process, we have mechanism to respond to supply chain issues with medicines such as we regularly work with clinicians and suppliers to mitigate any risk around supply shortages.

More specifically for COVID-19 and in anticipation of the global impact of the pandemic on countries where medicines may be sourced from, CM Health's response to critical medicine shortages during January 2020 – August 2020 has been to set up an internal working group to identify strategies to reduce waste and identify alternatives that could be used safely where possible, if necessary. A copy of the minutes from these working group meetings are attached as *Appendix B*, *Appendix C* and *Appendix D* reflect email communication relating to medication supply issues and weekly Pharmac updates received by email. As the national contractors we rely on Pharmac to provide governance and guidance on these matters. I suggest that you contact Pharmac directly if you have any further queries.

We have redacted a small amount of information from the documents attached as follows:

- Direct staff contact phone numbers and email addresses for non-CM Health and CM Health staff have been redacted as we consider this is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons (s.9(2)(a)).

For context CM Health employs over 7,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 569,400 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

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 may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Watson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Peter Watson  
**Acting Chief Executive Officer**  
**Counties Manukau Health**

Appendices:   A – Medicine Supply Summary  
                  B – Critical Medication Supply Chain Minutes  
                  C – Emails relating to medication supply issues  
                  D – Weekly Pharmac updates