

29 May 2020

Wendy McGuinness  
Via Email: [wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org](mailto:wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org)

Dear Wendy

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: MEDICINE SUPPLIES

Thank you for your email of 22 April 2020, to the Ministry of Health, in which you asked for information about the stock take of intensive care drugs in New Zealand. The Ministry has transferred your request to PHARMAC to respond.

Specifically, you have asked for the following information:

- Who is responsible for managing the stock take of intensive care drugs in New Zealand?
- What is 'the medical name' of all the intensive care drugs that are on the list to collect and store (especially those that are useful for treating patients with COVID-19)?
- Please list the quantities that MoH has in stock of each 'intensive care drug' (especially those that are useful for treating patients with COVID-19)?

Your information request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Information about PHARMAC's response to COVID-19, including information on funded medicines supply issues, is regularly updated on our website. <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/information-for/covid-19-pharmacs-response/>

I have answered each of your specific questions below.

1. *Who is responsible for managing the stock take of intensive care drugs in New Zealand?*

Each District Health Board (DHB) is responsible for purchasing and maintaining its own supplies of medicines, including medicines for use in intensive care.

2. *What is 'the medical name' of all the intensive care drugs that are on the list to collect and store, especially those that are useful for treating patients with COVID-19?*

Neither the Ministry of Health nor PHARMAC hold a list of intensive care medicines that DHBs are required to hold. Accordingly, your request for this information is refused under s18(g) of the OIA.

However, PHARMAC has recently sought advice from the Critical Care Advisory Group on this matter. The record of the meeting is publicly available on PHARMAC's website at: [www.pharmac.govt.nz/assets/2020-04-Critical-Care-Advisory-Group-record-published-7-May-2020.pdf](http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/assets/2020-04-Critical-Care-Advisory-Group-record-published-7-May-2020.pdf)

3. *List the quantities that MoH has in stock of each intensive care drug, especially those that are useful for treating patients with COVID-19.*

PHARMAC has been working with its contracted suppliers to secure an additional six months' supply, at normal demand volume, of all medicines that may be required for patients in intensive care units (ICU). These include sedatives, opioids, vasopressor agents, and muscle relaxants.

However, neither the Ministry of Health nor PHARMAC hold physical stocks of intensive care medicines. DHBs source their supplies directly from distributors. Accordingly, your request for this list is refused under s18(g) of the OIA.

Please note you have the right, by way of complaint under section 28(3) of the OIA to an Ombudsman, to seek an investigation and review of our decision.

We trust that this information answers your queries. We are making our information more freely available, so we will now publish selected OIA responses (excluding personal details) on our website. Please get in touch with us if you have any questions about this.

Yours sincerely



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