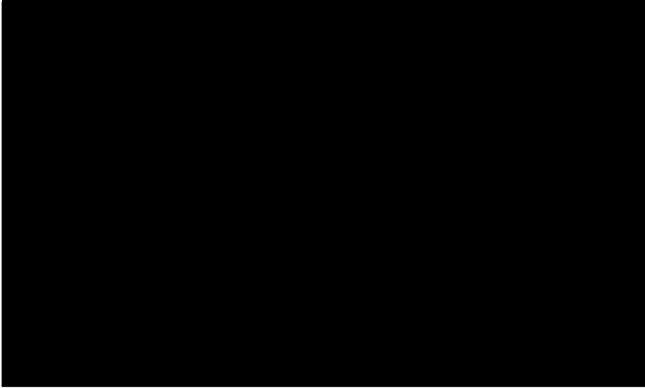


20 October 2020



**Re: Official Information Request – Neonatal Care**

I refer to your official information request dated 22 September 2020 requesting the following information:

**I am working on a story about neonatal care in NZ. Could you please tell me:**

**1. How many NICU beds is ADHB funded for?**

Auckland DHB is not directly funded for NICU beds. It is funded by the Government based on its overall population health needs and then it allocates funding internally based on the services it determines its population needs. Currently Auckland DHB has 40 resourced NICU cots.

**2. What were the occupancy levels, broken down by year, over the last three years (including this year so far) - eg how many babies were in the unit and how often is the unit at or above capacity?**

Occupancy levels for the last three years, and this year up to the end of August are in the table, along with the number of days in the year when occupancy was more than 40.

Year	Average number of patients in NICU	Number of days with > 40 patients
2017	33.9 (85%)	9
2018	34.6 (87%)	21
2019	34.9 (87%)	58
2020	34.3 (86%)	21

**3. How many women had to be sent away to give birth because of capacity issues over the last three years, including this year up to now?**

We do not formally collect this information. However since January 2019 we have a metro-Auckland escalation process for when NICUs are at or above capacity. Over this time there have been no in-utero transfers of women from Auckland City Hospital due to NICU capacity issues.

**4. What are the additional costs associated with increasing cot capacity above budget - could you tell me by how much the unit went over budget over the last five years, broken down by year?**

It is not possible to provide this information specifically for the costs of when cot capacity is above budget. Over the last 5 years NICU was over budget by an average of \$385,000 on a budget of \$13.7m. However this is due to many reasons, including increasing complexity and intensity of care, new treatments, MECA changes, etc. Annual figures as below:

	Amount over budget (000s)
2019 20	(603)
2018 19	(512)
2017 18	(384)
2016 17	(158)
2015 16	(269)
Average	(385)

**5. How much has the ADHB spent on sending women away to give birth over the last five years broken down by year?**

None have been sent away.

**6. Is the ADHB expecting an increase in resourcing for its NICU staffing in this year's budget and has this been signed off by the ministry yet? If so, by how much?**

As outlined in 1. Above, Auckland DHB is not directly funded for NICU services. Auckland DHB will adjust its NICU budget to reflect agreed increases in wage costs and supplies out of its overall funding from the Government.

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 faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
Chief Executive of Te Toka Tumai (Auckland District Health Board)

