

6 August 2020

Libby Wilson
Stuff

Via email: libby.wilson@stuff.co.nz



100 Heads Road, Private Bag 3003
Whanganui 4540, New Zealand

Dear Libby

Official Information Act Request – OIA 12986 COVID Border Control Effect on Clinical Workforce

On 8 July 2020, under section 12 of the Official Information Act, you requested the following information from Whanganui District Health Board (WDHB):

I'm a Stuff reporter looking into the effect COVID has had on the health sector, given many health professionals working in New Zealand come from overseas. I'm asking all DHBs about the impact this has had on them. I would like to know:

- What percentage of your usual clinical workforce is overseas-trained?
- If possible, please provide percentages of overseas-trained staffers in each of these categories: doctors, nurses, midwives, and allied health, science and technical professionals
- What impact do you expect border restrictions to have on the DHB workforce over the next year?
- Are there specialities likely to be under pressure as a result of border restrictions? For example, because there is a small workforce in New Zealand or because of overseas training needs. If so, which specialities and why?
- Is your DHB currently recruiting for any clinical positions which you cannot fill with New Zealand applicants?
- If so, how many, and what is/are the positions?
- Have you had any overseas-trained and recruited clinicians cut contracts short and return home because of COVID?
- If so, how many, and in what category (doctor, nurse...)?
- Anything else you wish to add.

Whanganui District Health Boards response:

- **What percentage of your usual clinical workforce is overseas-trained?**

New Zealand Trained	Overseas Trained	Unknown
61%	17%	22%

- **If possible, please provide percentages of overseas-trained staffers in each of these categories: doctors, nurses, midwives, and allied health, science and technical professionals**

Category	New Zealand Trained	Overseas Trained	Unknown
Medical	34%	66%	0%
Nursing	71%	13%	16%
Midwifery	55%	19%	26%
Allied	43%	8%	50%

Chief Executive | Phone 06 348 3140 | Fax 06 345 9390

- **What impact do you expect border restrictions to have on the DHB workforce over the next year?**

Interest from UK and Irish doctors remains strong, and is better than previous years. DHBs have been working with NZ Immigration to allow doctors to travel to and work in NZ.

- **Are there specialities likely to be under pressure as a result of border restrictions? For example, because there is a small workforce in New Zealand or because of overseas training needs. If so, which specialties and why?**

Yes, having difficulty getting individuals here.

Ophthalmology – impacted by the ability to obtain an international police clearance before completing Immigration application process.

Anaesthesiology – immigration processes completed, but unable to leave South Africa due to SA boarder restrictions (complete international travel ban).

- **Is your DHB currently recruiting for any clinical positions which you cannot fill with New Zealand applicants?**

Yes.

- **If so, how many, and what is/are the positions?**

SMO/Consultant O&G – 1

SMO/Consultant Psychiatry – 2

Registrars – 3 (not sure if there are NZ candidates available yet)

House officers – 2

- **Have you had any overseas-trained and recruited clinicians cut contracts short and return home because of Covid?**

Yes.

- **If so, how many, and in what category (doctor, nurse...)?**

Four UK trained house officers left in March/April.

- **Anything else you wish to add.**

Not Applicable.

Should you have any further queries about the above information, please contact our OIA co-ordinator Anne Phoenix at anne.phoenix@wdhb.org.nz

Yours sincerely



Russell Simpson
Chief Executive