



22 February 2022



Dear 

**Re: OIA request – Number of Code Red or Code Black instances at Waitematā DHB hospitals**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 31 January seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about any Code Black or Code Red instances at our hospitals.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitākere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,600 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

- 1. How many days, if any, did hospitals in Waitematā DHB spend in Code Red from January 01 2021 – December 31 – 2021?**
- 2. How many days, if any, did hospitals in Waitematā DHB spend in Code Black from January 01 2021 – December 31 2021?**

We are providing a combined response to questions 1 and 2.

Waitematā DHB does not have a Code Black alert system in place, so we can advise that this has not occurred during this timeframe.

North Shore and Waitākere hospitals use a Demand Response Framework which ensures that each service is responsible for managing increases in capacity and a clear escalation pathway is followed to ensure early response during periods of fluctuating demand. It provides an objective assessment process with clear role accountabilities and communication. The framework is as follows:

- Green – business-as-usual: adequate capacity in all areas.
- Amber – moderate: busy but flowing.
- Red – severe: occupied beds full; limited or slow movement to ward beds.

A “Whole of Hospital Huddle” is held each weekday morning, attended by all services, that identifies our status at the start of the day. If we are in Status Alert Red and look to be facing significant challenges by 11.00am, a contingency meeting with senior staff is set-up for early afternoon to plan and mitigate any potential risks going into the evening.

These standard operating responses ensure that our hospitals remain safe for patients and all aspects of patient care and hospital operations are routinely monitored and responded to.

The following table provides the number of days that North Shore and Waitākere hospitals were at Alert Status Red for the calendar year from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. Of note, for some of these days, the hospitals would not have been in the Alert Status Red for a full 24 hours. Each day, we continually work on plans to manage capacity and, following implementation, the alert status is often downgraded to Amber or Green within that period.

It should also be noted that, as a result of COVID-19 alert levels, elective surgery volumes were reduced in August, September and October and would account for the lower number of code red days for these months.

**Table 1: Number of days where North Shore and Waitakere hospitals were at Alert Status Red at some point in the day**

Calendar Year 2021	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Shore Hospital	23	17	24	27	19	14	16	14	2	10	21	20
Waitākere Hospital	24	16	21	24	21	18	12	10	0	2	11	7

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Executive Director Hospital Services  
Waitematā District Health Board**