

22 October 2019

Email: [ailsac@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:ailsac@adhb.govt.nz)

**Re: Official Information Act request – Measles correspondence between ARPHS staff about anti vaxxers**

I refer to your Official Information Act (OIA) request dated 8 October 2019 requesting the following information.

**All correspondence to and from Auckland Regional Public Health Service personnel (including staff and contractors), sent and/or received during the 2019 measles outbreak, concerning anti-vaxxers (also known as vaccine refusers or the vaccine-hesitant).**

I am responding from Auckland District Health Board (ADHB) as the DHB responsible for Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS). ARPHS provides public health services to all three metro Auckland District Health Boards – Waitematā District Health Board, Counties Manukau Health and Auckland District Health Board, and the populations they serve. ARPHS's core role is to protect and promote public health.

We are unsure as to your definition of anti-vaxxers. ARPHS defines an anti-vaxxer as a person who is openly opposed to vaccination and therefore refuses to have vaccinations. It does not include individuals who, for undisclosed reasons, have not ensured they or their family have received all available publicly funded vaccinations.

After reviewing what appears to be the information relevant to your request, ADHB has determined to reply by providing a summary, as provided for in s16(1)(e) of the OIA. The predominate reason is to protect the privacy of individuals who are parties to these communications.

- ARPHS communications team shared a measles social media document with the three Auckland DHB communications teams to support consistency of responses to public enquiries about measles.
- On the ARPHS facebook page there have been postings from members of the public who are expressly anti-vaccination. ARPHS social media policy includes a policy on the management

of these postings – to ensure ARPHS facebook page remains a source of evidence-based advice on vaccination that the public can trust, ARPHS communication team hides the posting from the public site so that only the person posting the message and people who have replied to this message can view it. ARPHS team do not engage in responding to ‘anti-vaxxer’ messages.

- ARPHS general manager received communications from St Peters College principal, who mentions parents who they describe as being anti-vaccination.
- When working with Baradene College to support the management of a measles case at the school, the school forwarded communications from a father concerned about his unvaccinated daughter.

I trust this information answers your questions.

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**