

25 October 2021

RE: Official Information Act (1982) request – comment on vaccinating children

Tēnā koe

On 23 September 2021 you requested, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Comment on if you are closely monitoring the adverse reactions side effects from the Covid-19 vaccine in children.

and

provide comment and liaise with Medsafe to have this shut down as the government is now complicit in a drug trial.

And on 24 September 2021 you requested, additionally:

all emails between the Childrens Commissioner and any health agency, government agency, that discusses commentary on the vaccine.

Comment

MedSafe analyses and monitors adverse events following immunisation and reports them transparently on its website. The Children's Commissioner relies on MedSafe, the Ministry of Health, and medical and public health experts to analyse and monitor the adverse events associated with vaccination in children to determine whether they are of concern. The Children's Commissioner's staff periodically read MedSafe reports and liaise with public health experts, particularly paediatric clinicians, in order to be assured that everything is being done to keep children and their families safe.

The Children's Commissioner's position, based on MedSafe reporting, and advice from experts, is that the vaccine is safe for young people, and it is in their best interests to be vaccinated where there is no medical reason not to. The assertion that vaccinating the population is 'a drug trial' are wrong – the Pfizer vaccine has been fully approved and is proven safe for people aged 12 and over. Moreover, vaccination of the population alongside other public health measures, is the best option to protect children from Covid19.

Emails

With regard to emails, please see the list at the end of this letter that are appended. I have identified an email trail between the Office of the Children's Commissioner and New Zealand's Chief Science Advisor to the Director General of Health, Professor Ian Town, regarding the vaccine. His reply includes an attachment. This email and attachment are appended. I have

withheld some contact information in these attachments under s9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of officials. In addition, I have identified several emails with relevant academic and clinical experts in New Zealand, and these emails are appended. One email had three images attached, about general childhood vaccinations (not Covid), and these are included. One attachment – a draft paper is withheld under s18(d) of the Act because it is about to be published.

Importantly, here at the Office of the Children's Commissioner we do not see children in isolation, but in the context of their families, whānau and communities. It is important for children's wellbeing that their families and households are also well.

The Children's Commissioner stands by his support for parents to vaccinate their children 12-years and over at this time, and that children and young people can consent to be vaccinated for their own protection and that of their whānau.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner recommends people seek information from official sources and refer to original sources of evidence rather than interpretations of them, to avoid being misled. Information can be found at: www.covid19.govt.nz, www.health.govt.nz and www.medsafe.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response to your OIA request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi

Dr Kathleen Logan (PhD)

Lead Advisor, Strategy Rights & Advice

Te Tari o te Kaikomihana mō ngā Tamariki

Office of the Children's Commissioner www.occ.org.nz

Attachments:

- Professor - Immunisation Advisory Centre.pdf (plus three graphs about childhood vaccine schedules attached to her email)
- Paediatric epidemiologist email#1.pdf
- Paediatric Infectious Diseases consultant Starship.pdf
- Paediatric epidemiologist email#2.pdf
- Chief Science Advisor to DG Health.pdf plus attachment to this email (COVID Issues Rebuttal_MoH_July 2021.pdf)
- Emails with Epidemiologist_AK.pdf
- Epidemiologist_AK_email#2