



6 April 2020

Amy S Van Wey Lovatt
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Dear Amy

Official Information Act Request

You have asked for information about storage of human tissue for diagnostic purposes.

Request 1:

I am writing to request a copy of the your DHB's best practice protocol for the archiving, storage, or biobanking of human tissue for diagnostic purposes, whether they are formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides, and the standards, legislation or scientific evidence which provides the basis for your DHB's protocol.

Northland DHB follows International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ)/Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) guidelines on the storage of tissue. Specimens from adult patient are kept for 10 years (slides and blocks) and paediatric patient specimens are kept until the child reaches the age of 25. The relevant extract from Northland DHB's Pathology Service Quality Manual is attached.

Request 2:

Is your DHB protocol for the archiving, storage, or biobanking of human tissue for diagnostic purposes, whether they are formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides, based on a universally adopted standard within NZ or has your DHB determined its own policy.

Northland DHB's protocols are in accordance with IANZ standards.

Request 3:

Please explain the potential hazards of leaving formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides in an unsecure, non-temperature and non-humidity regulated environment for 2 months over a NZ summer: say a on an employee's desk which is open to the public and in a repurposed house adjacent to the hospital from mid December to late February.

Northland DHB has standards under which all tissue is held, the foremost centres on security. All our laboratory areas are locked if no one is on site, we utilise onsite storage for all blocks and slides. These areas are not accessible to the public.

Off-site storage is an option however the area must meet the basic requirements of security, humidity and temperature control. However blocks are very stable in the condition they are in (formalin fixed), the controls in place revolve more around the potential growth of moulds etc.

Request 4:

Please provide me with the name of the independent agency or agencies which provides oversight for your medical laboratory.

IANZ/RCPA

If you have any queries relating to Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Chamberlain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Nick Chamberlain
Chief Executive