

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



M.R.M.

Email: fyi-request-17792-4bd6cd12@requests.fyi.org.nz
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Ref. CHOIA178 & CHOIA179

Dear M.R.M.

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your requests under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 2 December 2021 for information relating to the COVID-19 vaccination.

My Office received two requests from you for information on the same date. Under the Act, I have considered that both your requests should be treated as a single request due to their frequency and the similarity of the subject matter. Rather than quote to you the background of the request verbatim, I have attached it as Appendix 1. I will turn now to your specific requests.

“Why did the government feel it was necessary to persuade New Zealanders to accept the Covid-19 vaccinations by the use of coercion when this is contrary to the government's own vaccination strategy as confirmed in the New Zealand's Immunisation Handbook for the year 2020?”

Why did the Ministry of Health fail to recognize that the Pfizer vaccination paperwork - e.g. consent form and proof of vaccination card - needed to be amended for the Astra Zeneca vaccination roll-out effective Monday 27 November 2021.

Bearing in mind that the family member arrived at 11:40 a.m. and was told shortly thereafter that she needed to wait at least 50 minutes for the amended form to be organized, and that this was hours after the Te Awa/The Base Vaccination Centre opened to the public on Monday 27 November 2021 for Pfizer vaccinations, why did no-one from the Ministry of Health and the Te Awa/The Base Vaccination Centre in Hamilton do a quick and simple check early that morning - in anticipation of the Astra Zeneca vaccination roll-out - to ensure that the relevant paperwork was readily available?

Can a directive please be arranged to instruct vaccinators not to direct statements at vaccination recipients in terms of the Pfizer vaccination being the government's preference, and, vaccination recipients being asked why they prefer the Astra Zeneca, or any other, vaccination over the Pfizer vaccination?”

While the Act allows New Zealanders to ask for information from Ministers and government agencies, there is no requirement to create new information, compile information they do not hold or provide or prove an opinion. Your questions and their lengthy preamble appear to be designed to engage in a debate about the Government's COVID-19 vaccination programme, rather than a request for official information. The Act does not support requests where a

comment, argument or a hypothetical statement is put to me and I am then asked to comment on it, couched as a request for official information. These questions are therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act on the grounds that the information sought is not held by me and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

While I have formally refused your request as required by the law, I do appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback, which will be provided to the appropriate units in the Ministry of Health.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Appendix 1: Background to information request

Request 1:

I refer to the link provided below:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/immunisation-handbook-2020/2-processes-safe-immunisation>

The abovementioned document is New Zealand's Immunisation Handbook for the year 2020. (We are nearing the end of 2021 and I could not find this version on the internet).

At clause 2.1.2., under the heading "The Informed Consent Process", it reads --- "Informed consent is a process whereby the individual or parent/guardian are appropriately informed in an environment and manner that are meaningful. Having been well informed, they are willing and able to agree to what is being suggested without coercion."

Coercion means persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.

Our P.M., Jacinda Ardern, is on record as having made numerous threats relative to unvaccinated people not having Christmas, not having Summer, not being allowed to travel, etc.. So much so that Judith Collins referred to her as "Jacinda the Grinch".

Undeniably a large number of New Zealander's were persuaded to accept the Covid-19 vaccinations after reading and hearing the abovementioned, irrefutably coercive, threats.

Request 2:

As far as I know the government knew as early as July this year that it had placed an order for Astra Zeneca Covid-19 vaccinations. It has also known since 18 November 2021 that the Astra Zeneca vaccinations had arrived on New Zealand soil. Against this background a family member booked an Astra Zeneca vaccination appointment for Monday this week (27 November 2021).

As it was felt that extra time was needed to complete anticipated paperwork, she arrived at the Te Awa/The Base Vaccination Centre in Hamilton at 11:40 a.m. for the 12.00 a.m. appointment. Standing behind a couple who were firstly told to sanitize their hands and who were then led away to the waiting area, the family member did not realize that the mask she ought to have been wearing had been left in her car, and that she was therefore maskless. The person who approached her did not - a) tell her to sanitize her hands, and b) did not ask her where her mask was. After being asked if she wanted to be in a draw to win a small, plastic looking, clock - which invitation she declined - she was then told to fill in a flimsy piece of paper (slightly larger than a business card) with her name and date of birth. From there she was led to a table where she was told to sit down and fill in "the consent form." It was immediately noticed that the form had handwriting across the top which had been highlighted (with a marker) and that the words read; "Astra Zeneca." She queried this and was told that the Ministry of Health had not supplied the consent forms for the Astra Zeneca vaccinations, and, that they had decided to use the Pfizer forms and just cross out the word Pfizer that appeared in the consent form heading.

On reading through and completing the form the family member discovered that there were two other references to Pfizer that had not been altered. She was not happy with signing a form that was clearly for use with Pfizer vaccinations and not Astra Zeneca vaccinations,

and, she said this. She was then told that an amended form was being organized and that she would need to wait at least 50 minutes for the correct form to be sent through to the Te Awa/The Base Vaccination Centre from the Ministry of Health in Wellington. She was not happy about needing to wait this length of time but felt she had no alternative because the appointment was booked and she worried she would lose her place, and possibly a chance at having the Astra Zeneca vaccination, if she did not wait.

On moving to the waiting area she found herself in a group of three other people who had also told the same things as outlined above. After almost an hour's wait, new consent forms were provided to the family member and the three other aforementioned persons. It was noted that this form did not bear the Astra Zeneca name where the Pfizer name had been on the original form, and that in fact the entire consent heading had been removed along too. It was also later noted by the vaccinator that the proof of vaccination card (business card size) handed to the family member subsequently had Pfizer printed on it but not Astra Zeneca.

The family member was also very concerned that the consent form with Pfizer printed on it had printing on the back of the same form (in other words the form was a single page) whereas the consent form with Astra Zeneca printed on it had a separate, second, page with the same aforementioned printed on it, but that the second page was not stapled to the first page. Having asked for the two pages to be stapled together, the vaccinator used a 'gem clip' for this purpose which did not help as the potential for pages 1 and 2 to become dislodged from one was not diminished as would have been the case had the two pages been stapled together.

Notably, and most worryingly, it was only when the family member sat down - after waiting an hour for her vaccination - at the vaccinator's table that she was asked where her mask was, and, at which time she remembered leaving it in her car by mistake and was offered a disposable one.

A further concern was that each time someone stood up and walked away from a plastic chair in the waiting area, a staff member would remove one or two sanitized wipes from a packet of them lying on a table at the front of the waiting area, walk over to the empty chair and wipe it down ... not doing a careful or thorough job of this important task, and, crucially without wearing any gloves to protect themselves from potential infection with Covid-19 ... why else were the chairs being wiped down? Those wipes were then tossed into a near overflowing, small, dirt bin standing next to the aforementioned desk ... when any one of the wipes could have been contaminated with Covid-19 and ought to have been treated the same way as Covid-19 medical waste is.

Disconcertingly the family member was told by the vaccinator that Pfizer is the government's preference for Covid-19 vaccination, and from the get-go (after she was given a disposable mask that is) she was asked why she had decided to have the Astra Zeneca vaccination rather than the Pfizer vaccinator. Notwithstanding that this was private and confidential information that she ought not to have been questioned about, it made her feel that she was 'going against the grain' of what the government wants for New Zealanders.

Lastly, two of the three abovementioned other people were heard complaining about needing to get back to work and being delayed by the above described unnecessary and entirely unavoidable disorganisation.