

Ref: 215173

Friday, 28 January 2022

David Adamson

By email to fyi-request-17988-12116234@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe David,

Response to your request for Official Information

On 17 December 2021, you requested from the Human Rights Commission (“the Commission”) the following information:

1. Provide details of any health or medical qualifications held by the Human Rights Commissioner or his staff that have helped inform the public statements made by the Commission/ Commissioner on COVID-19 vaccine mandates or other health regulations related to COVID-19.

Response to your request

The Chief Human Rights Commissioner holds the following health qualifications and experience, which informs his and the Commission’s COVID-19 work in general, including public statements:

- Honorary doctorate by the Nordic School of Public Health.
- Experience as the first UN Special Rapporteur on the highest attainable standard of health. In this independent capacity, he reported, orally and in writing, to the UN General Assembly, UN Commission on Human Rights and UN Human Rights Council on right to health issues. He submitted thematic reports on a wide range of right to health issues, such as sexual and reproductive health, neglected diseases, maternal mortality, and the health-rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies and developed frameworks on how to measure the progressive realisation of the right to health. He also undertook country missions in India, Peru, Sweden, and Uganda.
- Member of a Working Group of the UN Commission on Information and Accountability on Women's and Children's Health. (2010-2011)
- Founded the International Initiative on Maternal Mortality and Human Rights.
- Senior Human Rights Advisor to the Assistant Director-General, WHO, Flavia Bustreo, and directed a project which researched whether there was evidence of impact of a human rights approach to health. (2011-2013)

- Has sat on a number of expert groups, boards and inquiries in relation to health including:
 - UN Secretary-General's independent Expert Review Group on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health (iERG).
 - Statutory human rights inquiry into emergency health care established by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.
 - Board of the National Health Service (NHS) England initiative, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Inclusion and Empowerment (SHRINE).
 - United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)'s External Advisory Panel
 - Editorial Boards of the *Health and Human Rights Journal* and *International Journal on Human Rights and Drug Policy*.
- Has provided expert testimony to the European Court of Human Rights, via the Centre for Reproductive Rights, and Inter-American Court of Human Rights on right to health issues.
- Co-edited a Special Issue of Harvard's *Health and Human Rights Journal* which deepened analysis on the topic of health of women and children (2015)
- Has authored vast publications on health – including co-author a major landmark study on health systems and the right to health in 194 countries published in the *Lancet* in 2008.

Additionally, a senior staff member involved in the Commission's COVID-19 work has extensive experience in developing health communications, including public health campaigns aimed at Pacific, Māori and the general population across a wide range of health issues.

They have also completed the following courses run by Otago University's Public Health Summer School:

- Update on Rheumatic Fever prevention and control (2017)
- Emerging issues in Pacific Health research (2018)
- Digital health – Informatics for population health gain and equity course (2019)

Alternative avenues

If you are unhappy with this response, under the Official Information Act you are entitled to complain to the Ombudsman's Office. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or on freephone 0800 802 602.

If you have any further queries about this response, please feel free to contact me directly.

Nāku noa, nā

Joanne van Heerden
Services Coordinator