

20 September 2022

Scout Barbour-Evans
fyi-request-20033-604a1100@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Scout,

Your Official Information Act request, reference H2022010942:

Thank you for your request, which was transferred from Pharmac to the Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health) on 23 August 2022, for information relating to Under-5 COVID-19 vaccination.

As the matters you have raised now fall under the functions of Te Whatu Ora, our agency will respond to your request, which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I will quote and respond to each part of your request below.

1. Can you please provide an outline of the process for an under-5 COVID-19 vaccination to be approved in Aotearoa New Zealand?

For COVID-19 vaccinations to be administered to those under five years of age in New Zealand, a pharmaceutical company must apply to Medsafe, New Zealand's medicine safety authority. Medsafe assess all COVID-19 vaccine applications before granting approval. For your information, the status of all COVID-19 vaccine applications is publicly available on the Medsafe website here:

www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/status-of-applications.asp

Please note that if Medsafe approves an application, the New Zealand Government then considers advice and makes decisions on when and who a particular vaccine will be used for as part of the COVID-19 immunisation programme. Advice is provided by the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG), who review international literature and make recommendations for use of COVID-19 vaccines. Please note that it is up to the individual company to choose to apply, which results in different countries having access at different times.

2. Has either Pfizer or Moderna applied for their under-5 COVID-19 vaccines to be used in Aotearoa New Zealand?

3. If neither Pfizer or Moderna have made this application yet, does Pharmac and the NZ government have the ability to reach out?

Pfizer has applied to Medsafe for its paediatric vaccine to be approved for use in children aged six months to five years old. Medsafe is currently assessing the clinical and manufacturing data provided by Pfizer, which is being treated as a priority.

4. Is there an intention or hope from Pharmac to roll out COVID-19 vaccines to our youngest New Zealanders this year?

Unfortunately, I am unable to provide a timeline for when the Pfizer paediatric COVID-19 vaccine may be available for children under five years of age. However, once a decision has been made, this information will be communicated publicly.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. You are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may decide to proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Rachel Mackay
Acting Director
National Immunisation Programme