

19 June 2023

Anthony Jordan

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Kia ora Anthony

Your Official Information Act request, reference: GOV-025189

Thank you for your email of 21 May 2023, asking for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *Has acc funded this medication and for how many people?*
2. *Policy advise received, created or any general documents about mc that acc has.*
3. *Emails sent or received by acc Pharmaceutical Advisors regarding mc.*
4. *Literature and research used by acc Pharmaceutical Advisors regarding mc decisions.*
5. *Information about the decision process and decision makers in acc for mc requests from clients.*

Cannabis-based medicine (question 1)

Since 2008, ACC has funded cannabis-based medication for 101 clients.

Please find attached the ACC policy documents regarding cannabis-based medicine (questions 2 and 5)

- *Access cannabis-based medicine and product funding requests*
- *Eligibility for pharmaceutical funding policy*

Please note that as staff names are considered outside the scope of your request, we have removed them from the documents.

Pharmaceutical advisors' relevant emails (question 3)

To identify potentially relevant correspondence, we searched the inboxes of pharmaceutical advisors since 2008 (when ACC began funding the medication) for emails containing the words 'medical cannabis.' This search identified 4,270 emails. To determine which emails are in scope of your request would require us to manually review them. As such, we are refusing to provide the email correspondence requested as it would require substantial collation and research to extract. This decision has been made under section 18(f) of the Act.

Research relied on in cannabis-based medicine funding decisions (question 4)

Please refer to section 5.0 of the attached document *Eligibility for pharmaceutical funding policy* which specifies that the medical practitioner overseeing prescribing must supply clinical research when a funding request is made for cannabis-based medicine. Any research provided is held on individual claim files.

To gather the research used in approved funding requests, a manual review of 101 claims would be required. Therefore, we are refusing this part of your request as it would require substantial collation and research to extract. This decision is made under section 18(f) of the Act.

Where information has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act, we considered extending our timeframe to respond or applying a charge (as allowed under the Act). However, neither of these options were offered as we determined that the resources required to extract the information would unreasonably interfere with the everyday functions of the team(s) involved.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public

ACC may decide to proactively release a copy of this response on ACC's website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available www.acc.co.nz/resources/#/category/12.

If you have any questions about this response, please get in touch

You can email me at GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you can also contact the Ombudsman via info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Ngā mihi



Sara Freitag

Acting Manager Official Information Act Services
Government Engagement