

20 July 2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Official Information Act Request (OIA 1970)

I refer to your Official Information Act request received via email on 23 June 2020 in which you specifically requested the following:

I would like to do an OIA on the protocols the DHB had/have in relation to access for support people of patients in the public hospitals within your DHB region during Level 2 lockdown (between 14 May and 8 June) and Level 1.

When New Zealand entered Alert Level 1, Dunedin and Southland Hospitals returned to their normal visiting hours which included access for support people of patients.

Communications relating to visitors under Level 2 were made public through:

- The Southern Health website COVID-19 pages (*we can't provide a copy of this as it was replaced with updated information as we went down Alert Levels*);
- Southern District Health Board's Facebook page (screenshots below) and;
- Advertisements in newspapers around the Southern region. (PDFs attached)

Visitor restrictions at Level 2 were also mentioned in three daily media updates that were released to the media on consecutive days. Throughout the COVID-19 response, our daily media updates were well used by the media and in some cases visiting restrictions and service information were extensively reported by them. These daily updates were also posted, and remain, on the Southern Health website. Below are the links to these updates:

- Daily Media Update Tuesday 12 May
<https://www.southernhealth.nz/publications/daily-media-update-tuesday-12-may-2020>
- Daily Media Update Wednesday 13 May
<https://www.southernhealth.nz/publications/daily-media-update-wednesday-13-may-2020>
- Daily Media Update Thursday 14 May
<https://www.southernhealth.nz/publications/daily-media-update-thursday-14-may-2020-0>

Southern District Health Board's Facebook page - screenshots

Southern District Health Board
Published by Pauline Chin [?] · May 22 · 🌐

A reminder for hospital visiting during level 2.
For full details, please visit:
<https://www.southernhealth.nz/sdhubCOVID19/current-status...>

Hospital Visiting for Level 2

Hospital visitor reminder

Members of the public are reminded that visiting hours for Southland and Dunedin Hospitals are between 2pm and 6pm, with one nominated visitor per patient each day.

Visitors may experience delays, as everyone entering the hospital has to be screened. Peak delays are being experienced between 2pm and 3pm as large volumes of people arrive during that time. To avoid a long wait, we advise arriving at a later time.

We apologise for any inconvenience and thank visitors for their patience and understanding. Our hospital staff are working hard to process visitors as quickly and professionally as possible, so please be kind.

Full details on the current visitor restrictions can be found on the Southern Health website.

Southern District Health Board
Published by Pauline Chin [?] · May 20 · 🌐

Visitor Screening - Level 2

With the move to Level 2, Dunedin and Southland Hospitals are experiencing an increased number of visitors, who need to be screened prior to entry.

This screening helps keep our patients and staff safe by identifying any potentially unwell or infectious visitors. It also allows us to contact trace the more than one thousand people visiting our hospital facilities each day.

Visitors are having to line up 2 metres apart to be screened, which does take time. We thank visitors for their patience and understanding as we work to fulfil the public safety requirements of Level 2, to keep them and their whānau safe.

Processing such a large volume of visitors can cause a wait at peak times. Our hospital staff are working hard to process visitors as quickly and professionally as possible, so please be kind.

The current visitor policy allows one nominated visitor per patient who is allowed to visit once per day between 2pm and 6pm. Please note our busiest time for visitor arrivals is at 2pm.

Southern DHB is working on a more relaxed visitors policy, but this will not be put in place until we are confident it will not put further pressure on visitor screening procedures.

We thank the public for their understanding as we work through this next step in our COVID-19 journey.

Southern District Health Board
Published by Mel Garry [?] · May 18 · 🌐

Update - Visiting our hospitals at Alert Level 2

Now we're at Alert Level 2 we're planning so we can safely let more visitors back into our hospitals but we still need a bit more time to get ready.

So for now our existing visiting restriction will stay in place until further notice.

The policy is:

- Inpatients can nominate one person who will be allowed to visit them in hospital.
- This person will be allowed to visit once per day between 2pm and 6pm.
- Visitors will be screened for COVID-19 and details taken upon entry to the hospital.
- Visitors must maintain physical distance of at least one metre from other people and wash or gel hands on arrival and departure
- No visitors under the age of 14

It's often really busy at 2pm so a good tip is to come along a bit later.

The safety of our patients, visitors and staff is of the utmost importance and we thank you for your understanding.

We'll let you know our new visiting policy as soon as we can.

Southern District Health Board
Published by Pauline Chin [?] · May 14 · 🌐

Moving to Alert Level 2 means we can allow more visitors to our hospitals. We need a bit more time to plan for more visitors and more patients attending appointments. If you're a visitor our outpatient you'll still have to be screened for #COVID19 and we'll still have take your details. We're working on the best way to do this so you don't have to wait too long.

It's often really busy at 2pm so a good tip is to come along a bit later. We'll let you know our new visiting policy very soon!

SDHB Facilities Visitor Policy Update

To give us time to do this our existing visiting restriction will stay in place until at least Monday 18 May:

- Inpatients can nominate one person who will be allowed to visit them in hospital.
- This person will be allowed to visit once per day between 2pm and 6pm.
- Visitors must maintain physical distance of at least one metre from other people and wash or gel hands on arrival and departure

Visitors will be logged and screened upon entry to the hospital.

Visiting hours will be 2pm-6pm every day.

Please also find attached:

- Southern Health flyer Alert Level 2
- Southern Health newsletter "Better Health" May 2020 edition
- Tips for your outpatient appointment at Dunedin Hospital
- Take Note – COVID-19 Hospital Planning Update

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of our decision by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's Office can be contacted on 0800 802 602 or on-line at <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Fleming', is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark or background.

Chris Fleming
Chief Executive Officer

Enclosures:

1. Southern Health flyer Alert Level 2
2. Better Health May 2020
3. Tips for your outpatient appointment at Dunedin Hospital
4. Take Note – COVID-19 Hospital Planning Update

We are now at Alert Level 2 as we unite against COVID-19. Our hospitals, doctors' surgeries and other essential health services are open. We are also carefully expanding the services we can offer under Level 2, but safety measures remain in place to keep our patients, staff and the community safe.

We want to reassure you that we are here to help. Essential services are running and support is there for you if you need it. If it's an emergency, call 111.

Get tested immediately if you have symptoms

While the risk of COVID-19 in the Southern district is now low, it is imperative that anyone with any symptoms gets tested immediately. You are not over-reacting, you will be helping keep yourself, your whānau and your community safe.

You should stay at home until the result of your test is available. If the test is positive, you must stay in isolation until declared recovered by Public Health South, and your immediate close contacts should also self-isolate.

The lockdown and increased handwashing has led to an unexpectedly low flu season. However, opening of schools and workplaces could see flu symptoms start to rise.

That's why we need to practise physical distancing (2 metres with strangers, 1 metre with their workmates), good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.

Symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to a range of other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu, and do not necessarily mean that you have COVID-19. They include:

- a cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of smell.

Shortness of breath is a sign of possible pneumonia and requires immediate medical attention.

COVID-19 assessment and testing

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, please call your GP or free phone – **0800 VIRUS19 (0800 847 8719)**.

You will be asked further questions and referred, where appropriate, for testing.

Testing for COVID-19 is being conducted by most general practices, and at two CBACs in the Southern district – in Dunedin and Invercargill.

There are also Designated Practices where people who don't have a GP, or who don't know who their doctor is, can be referred for testing.

Designated Practices are:

- Alexandra Family Medical
- Cromwell Medical Centre
- Fiordland Medical Centre
- Health Central Ltd
- He Puna Waiora Wellness Centre
- Junction Health (Cromwell)
- Kurow Medical
- Mosgiel Health Centre
- Queenstown Medical
- Te Kāika
- Wakatipu Medical Centre
- Wanaka Medical Centre

There is no charge for COVID-19 testing, whether the testing is carried out at a CBAC or in a general practice. CBACs are operating in Dunedin and Invercargill from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday and on weekends from 10am to 2pm.

Our hospitals

Visitor restrictions

Current visiting restrictions will remain in place until at least Monday 18 May. This is one nominated visitor per patient who is allowed to visit once per day between 2pm and 6pm.

The visitor policy is under regular review and any changes to the policy will be advised as soon as it is released.

Non-urgent surgery and outpatient appointments gradually resuming

We continue to resume health services across the region, in order of clinical priority. This may mean managing appointments in a different way such as via online/telephone/non-contact methods.

Please be reassured that you will be contacted as soon as we can if you have an outstanding appointment or surgery.

Screening of patients and visitors

We are required to continue screening of all patients and visitors attending our facilities. Please be prepared for some delays when you arrive at one of our hospitals or facilities and ensure that you allow additional time when attending any appointments. If visiting please be aware our busiest time is at 2pm and accordingly if you are able to delay your visit delays may be reduced.

Maternity

Midwifery care and maternity care is an essential service and is available for everyone who needs it. For pregnancy-related care and advice please contact your Lead Maternity Carer. Women who have not been exposed to COVID-19 are still able to choose their place of birth as per normal. Healthy well women with normal pregnancies are encouraged to consider birth at home or their local primary maternity unit. Women can also consider a postnatal transfer to a rural primary maternity unit for inpatient postnatal care.

Women in labour in a maternity facility will be allowed one support partner, for the duration of the labour and birth. A maximum of one visitor at a time and one visit per day for women in antenatal in-patient or postnatal wards.

Other essential services

District nursing

The district nursing service are now providing a full range of services with home visits and clinic recommencing. Referrals are being accepted as normal. To accommodate the requirements under Level 2 and maintain patient and staff safety, there may be some changes to how some services are delivered.

Home care services

Home and Community Support Services are progressively returning to providing a full range of services. Clients will be contacted by the provider. To accommodate the requirements under Level 2 and maintain patient and staff safety, there may be some changes to how some services are delivered.

Home Team/Community Rehab

These services are operating as normal and patients will be contacted if there is a change to their schedule.

Hospice

Hospice services continue to be delivered through Otago and Southland. Inpatient and community services are running largely as normal. Access to advice and support is available 24/7 (Otago 0800 473 6005 and Southland 0800 211 308) and is not limited to patients known to the Hospice.

Meals on Wheels

The Meals on Wheels services are being delivered as usual. Clients should have a good back up plan just in case a meal doesn't make it to its destination.

In the community

Rest assured services are available but they may not be quite the same as usual. Please bear with us as we safely expand our services and meet the highest need first.

General Practices

General Practices in the Southern district are open. People should call if they need health care. If you would ordinarily call your doctor, call your doctor.

Pharmacy

Pharmacies are open. Please check opening times, as they may be different to usual.

Dental care

At Level 2 low risk patients are able to receive a normal range of dental care from their usual provider. Please be aware that we are expecting to catch up on a lot of deferred work over the next few weeks.

Community Oral Health Services for children aged 0-12 years are open. Oral Health team: Otago 0800 672 543, and Southland 0800 570 300. For adults in the Southern district, please contact your usual provider.

Patients who are identified as high risk will only be able to have essential emergency care provided.

Blood tests

Information about Southern Community Laboratory centres that are operating and their opening times can now be found at: www.sclabs.co.nz/index.php/collection-centres/dunedin. Please click on 'Otago-Southland clinics – summary of changes'

Sexual health

Dunedin and Southland sexual health clinics are open. Patients are asked to contact the clinic to arrange a consultation. There are no drop in clinics available.

Dunedin Clinic:

Open Monday to Friday 9am - 4.30pm
Phone 0800 742 546 ext 1

Invercargill clinic:

Open Mondays 9am-4.30pm
Phone 0800 742 546 ext 2

Urban and rural youth health clinics:

Youth health & wellbeing, sexual health & contraception.
This service is available. Please contact your public health nurse or email: publichealthnursing@southernhb.govt.nz

Public Health nursing

Public health nursing services are available to schools and families for child and youth health. Please contact: publichealthnursing@southernhb.govt.nz

For more information about these services: [southernhealth.nz/sdhdCOVID19/current-status](https://www.southernhealth.nz/sdhdCOVID19/current-status)



Unite
against
COVID-19





A COVID-19 simulation in action at the Dunedin Public Hospital

COVID-19 simulations invaluable to Southern DHB

A state-of-the-art manikin and a multi-service team of medical professionals are proving invaluable in Southern DHB's fight against COVID-19.

Led by Southern DHB Emergency Department consultant and Otago Clinical Skills Laboratories Director Dr Ohad Dar and Otago Clinical Skills Laboratories Clinical Coordinator Paul Medeiros, along with a network of educators and clinicians, this coordinated effort has seen a series of COVID-19 'real life' clinical simulations run over the last month.

"The last few months have been extremely demanding on front line staff due to the significant changes in our work environment and normal pathways," says Dr Dar.

"We have taken this opportunity to provide simulation-based education for many of our frontline health workers, so they can adapt to change and feel confident in managing a range of scenarios."

The simulation training sessions are made up of health workers from different services including ED, Anaesthetics, ICU, Nursing, Medical, Orderlies, St John, and Infection Control.

In each session, they are presented with a different COVID-19 scenario to work through, including transporting a patient with significant respiratory distress, patient flow through hospitals, intubation, and communication between team members wearing PPE.

After each simulation, the team comes together for an extensive debrief, providing a list of workarounds and recommendations to the COVID-19 Response Planning teams.

Tip of the hat to Southern nurses and midwives

They are the true definition of healthcare heroes – working tirelessly at the frontline to ensure the wellbeing of our patients and community during these unprecedented times. Over the past few weeks, we have celebrated the International Day of the Midwife and International Nurses Day, acknowledging our wonderful community of nurses and midwives and their incredible contribution to the Southern region.



Dunedin nurse honoured

Congratulations to Dunedin Hospital Emergency Department Nurse Rosie Simpson who has been made an Honorary Life Member of the College of Emergency Nurses NZ (CEENZ).

Rosie has worked in the Emergency Department at Dunedin Hospital for 30 years. For ten of those years she was a triage instructor and made a significant contribution to the triage course.



Queenstown midwife acknowledged by locals

Lakes District Hospital Midwifery Coordinator and Midwife, Ann Mackay, has been acknowledged by local Queenstown restaurant The Hayes, with a free meal as thanks for working around the clock to ensure women and their babies were cared for during the last two months. Ann paid tribute to the Queenstown community and how supportive people have been throughout the pandemic.



Southland celebrates 12 NETP graduates

Twelve Southland graduate nurses have successfully completed the Nursing Entry to Practice Programme (NETP) that ran from January 2019-January 2020.

NETP Coordinator Leah Watson says nurses undertake NETP during their first year as a Registered Nurse, to create a smooth transition from being a student to a nurse with real life responsibilities.

"Providing professional and personal support and guidance to new grads in the early years of a nursing career is essential because their journey shapes and moulds them into the sort of nurse they are likely to be in the future," says Leah.

The NETP Programme required the nurses to complete three (now reduced to two) formal academic assignments; meet a certain number of clinical hours; and submit a Level 2 PDRP portfolio demonstrating competence. Participants also have to attend 12 NETP training days, and work a minimum of 0.8 FTE, so it is a busy programme for them, Leah says.

"The 2019-2020 graduate group have met all of the NETP requirements and have graduated from the programme. All have been offered positions in the workplace and have decided to stay."



New Dunedin Hospital project demolition ramps up

As the people of Dunedin make their way back to workplaces outside of the home, those who have travelled through the city and past the former Cadbury factory site may have noticed some sizeable changes.

Demolition work for the New Dunedin Hospital project was put on hold during Covid-19 lockdown, but as soon as Alert Level 3 arrived, work ramped back up, and continues as the former Cadbury distribution warehouse is brought down.

Over the course of just two weeks, the warehouse, which sits between Castle, Cumberland and St Andrews Streets, will be entirely demolished.

Demolition contractors Ceres NZ developed a detailed COVID-19

Management Plan under Level 3, and put strict measures in place to ensure all work can be carried out safely, with workers maintaining safe physical distancing, and with hand hygiene stations set up.

Careful traffic planning has also ensured that motorists and cyclists will not be impacted throughout this process, which has been important as the city comes back to life under Alert Level 2.

Mike Barns, New Dunedin Hospital Programme Director, is confident that any delay caused by COVID-19 Alert Level 4 lockdown, will not be significant.

“We were just starting demolition prior to the lockdown, and the demolition involves quite a lot of preparatory work, so getting

that done while we were in lockdown was actually quite fortuitous.”

“We’ve got quite a bit of time up our sleeves for the rest of the demolition process so we have the best opportunity to do it safely, do it well, and work with the city to make sure we’re considerate in that work.”

The Cadbury block will eventually be the site of the New Dunedin Hospital’s planned inpatient building. The fast-tracked outpatient building will be built on the Wilson’s carpark block, directly north of the former Cadbury distribution warehouse. Demolition of the Wilson’s block is set to follow the stripping of materials from the rest of the Cadbury site, subject to resource consents.

How did Gore Health respond to COVID-19 Pandemic?

How did we plan and manage our response? Gore Health activated the Health Emergency Plan and had the first meeting of the Emergency Operations Centre on 10 March 2020 for the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Members of the Leadership Team have been active on a number of forums via zoom including:

- Southern DHB Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC)
- Rural Hospitals
- Eastern Southland Health Services
- Gore Civil Defence EOC linking into Emergency Management Southland Emergency Operations Centre
- Welfare.

Participating in these forums has been a key strength in Gore Health and the Eastern Southland response during this pandemic.

What changes were made to the hospital? In Level 4, then 3, the Outpatients area was utilised to expand the Emergency Department to a four-bed ‘red’ zone for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and a six-bed ‘green’ zone for other presentations.

In Level 2, the Emergency Department has been converted back to the original department with two further areas identified to assess any suspected cases. There are also four isolation rooms available in the inpatient ward.

Social distancing has been maintained within the hospital with chairs removed from the waiting areas and spaced, and staff maintaining distancing within their work environments.

To date 73 patients have been tested through the Emergency Department ‘red’ zone; one was positive. As part of the national surveillance programme overseen in the Southern district by Public Health South, 59 tests were carried out on Gore Health staff, which were all negative.

How have we supported our staff and community? The health & safety of staff has been a priority throughout this crisis – and supporting staff safety is also part of supporting the safety of those we care for.

Clinical staff completed compulsory training relating to Personal Protective Equipment and Hand Hygiene. Further education sessions have been available through Mobile Health webinars, which have been supported by clinical staff.

Appropriate levels of hand hygiene products, cleaning products and Personal Protective Equipment have been monitored and maintained throughout the pandemic. Cleaning of high risk areas is a priority at this time, and we have been completing additional cleaning of other areas as required.

Gore Health has been flexible with working hours and working from home as

appropriate.

Operations Manager - Claire Whitten has managed our volunteers and liaised on welfare concerns.

Karl Metzler (CEO) and Glenda Maxwell (Acting Clinical Manager) have been available to media, and the radio and newspaper have been used to get key messages to the public.

What do patients and visitors need to know now? Visiting hours have been guided by the Ministry of Health with approval from Chief Executive Officer and Acting Clinical Manager in exceptional circumstances.

The Gore Health Allied Health and District Nursing teams have started completing community visits. Consultation by phone will be completed in the first instance.

The past seven weeks during the COVID 19 pandemic have been unprecedented times. Gore Health would like to thank its staff and their families for all they have done and are doing. To our local community, THANK YOU for all you have done to follow the Ministry of Health principles for each Alert Level – you have made a difference.

CEO Update



Karl Metzler

I would like to acknowledge all of our Gore Health team and families for their courage and selflessness during the COVID-19 lockdown. They have shown amazing resilience during this extraordinary time and I thank them for all they have done over the past two months to deliver health services under exceptional circumstances and ensure our patients and the community remain safe.

Sadly, during Lockdown, a number of families/whānau had loved ones who passed during this time and have been separated and denied the opportunity to say proper goodbyes – this has been very difficult and will be the lasting impact that Covid-19 has for me personally. My sincere hope is that you find a way to grieve your losses and honour their memories.

To the Southern DHB – thank you for your unwavering support and for working cohesively together as a region as we face the day-to-day complexities of COVID-19. The use of existing smart technology and reducing the levels of bureaucracy, has meant that we have been a far more efficient and nimble health system. We need to avoid relapsing back to the “stickiness” of the status quo!

It is so important to acknowledge the many lifesaving lessons we have learnt, from countries like China, Iraq and Western Europe who have borne the full impact of how deadly COVID-19 can be, early on in the pandemic outbreak.

In New Zealand it feels like the sprint may be over but the marathon is just beginning! I would like to thank our community for their patience and understanding over the past weeks.

Gore Hospital visiting hours

Current visiting hours are 2pm-4pm and 6pm-7pm with one visitor per patient at any time.

Gore Hospital has a single point of entry through the front reception area where all visitors onsite will be asked to complete the Visitor Register to ensure details are held if contact tracing is required.

Community visits

The Gore Health Allied Health and District Nursing teams have started completing community visits. Consultation by phone will be completed in the first instance.

Tips for your Outpatient Appointment at Dunedin Hospital

- Please note, not all appointments are face-to-face, so please read your letter carefully.
- If you become unwell in the days before your appointment please ring the number on the letter and reschedule.
- The day before your appointment you will be rung and asked some questions about symptoms of COVID-19. Please answer accurately.

For your appointment please allow plenty of time for:

- Car parking.
- The only entrance to the hospital is Great King Street.
- Everyone entering the Hospital is screened, so there are queues.
- Stand 2m apart in the queue.
- Use hand sanitiser on arrival at the Hospital, and at Outpatients.
- If you need to, one support person may attend with you.

Thank you for your patience.

Dunedin Hospital Outpatient Team.

Visitor policy: Dunedin Hospital

As we move from Level 4 to Level 3 – effective from Tuesday 28th of April for any visitors to Dunedin Hospital – there are some important points to note:

- **We remain in Level 4 until this time – this means the restrictions for visiting are unchanged.**
 - Anyone who has any respiratory symptoms (no matter how minor) **must not** visit
 - Patients who are suspected to have COVID-19 are not permitted to have visitors until their diagnosis is confirmed
 - A maximum of one visitor or legal guardian will be granted access if approved
 - Visiting patients who have been admitted with COVID-19 is only permitted at the discretion of the CM or senior clinician who is managing the patient, under supervision of nursing staff
 - Staff must ascertain who the whanau spokesperson will be as a point of contact
 - A poster should be at the entrance to your area instructing good hand hygiene, and what the restriction level is (currently Level 4)
 - Consider other options for allowing patients to remain in touch with family, whanau or significant other e.g. FaceTime, Skype, Messenger
 - Visitors to hospital are logged (through visitor screening) – the purpose of this is to ensure we can provide names for contact tracing if there is an instance where there is a COVID-19 diagnosis
 - Visiting hours are 2pm-8pm.

- **Maternity also remains unchanged as we continue in Level 4:**
 - One nominated visitor/support person, screened on entry, to accompany **woman in labour**
 - Stays with woman in birthing suite
 - Ability to allow visitor to accompany woman to postnatal room considered on case-by-case basis – the visitor **must** stay in room with woman
 - Once the visitor leaves premises, they will not be allowed re-entry.

We are currently waiting on the National Hospital Clinic and Visitor Policy to be released which provides further guidance. However, there will continue to be restrictions similar to what is already in place at Level 3. Further communication will be sent out early next week around this.

Other points to note:

- Those undertaking screening sometimes need to call the ward to check on visitor entry – please ensure you are using a phone that is answered readily to help facilitate this process and reduce queuing that can occur in the hospital entrance
- It has been noted there seems to be delays in people leaving at the end of visiting with a number of people still moving around as late as 10pm. Please ensure visitors to your area are asked to leave just prior to 8pm. The hospital doors will be locked from 8.30pm.

Please ensure all staff are familiar with this policy and reinforce we remain at **Alert Level 4**.

Southern Future

It's up to us

