

16 February 2026

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00107341

Thank you for your email on 20 January 2026, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

- 1. The number of assaults against hospital workers in each of the past four years (2022-2025 inclusive) - broken down by month, and by region*
- 2. The number of assaults against emergency department staff in each of the past four years (2022-2025 inclusive) - broken down by month, and by region*

Health NZ is focused on delivering timely, quality healthcare for all New Zealanders, and ensuring the security of patients and staff within hospitals is an important part of that. Hospitals can be challenging environments where patients are sometimes cognitively impaired, impacted by some form of substance or alcohol abuse, or coping with the initial impact of an acute injury. This can often affect their judgment and demeanour, resulting in unpredictable behaviour. We cannot prevent all these issues from occurring but have robust processes in place to manage them - minimising the risk of harm to staff and preventing further escalation.

For this reason, we have focused our control measures on reducing the consequences by, for example, providing staff with personal alarms and appropriate training. Our security teams are in close proximity to our emergency departments (EDs) and trained to help de-escalate incidents of aggression, if required.

Budget 2024 backed this up by committing \$31 million over four years to strengthen security across emergency departments. This funding provided:

- 44 FTE security guards for eight high-priority EDs
- 10 FTE security guard positions available to all hospitals with EDs
- Additional training for security teams of more than 1,000 frontline staff
- Flexible funding package allowing Health NZ to surge security support across all 33 emergency departments when needed.

These positions are funded for four years as part of the ED Security Improvement Programme. All 44 permanent roles have been filled, and the surge funding has supported the engagement of around 30 additional casual guards.

Budget 2025 funded 1.4 FTE security guards for our regional EDs to support clinical staff in caring for mental health patients. This resource is additional to current guard resources of 12.6 FTE total being filled by contractors.

Planned future improvements will make it easier for staff to report harm events, including assaults, through a more streamlined and accessible reporting system. The updated portal is designed to reduce barriers and support timely reporting, which helps us learn and respond effectively.

Alongside this, we remain committed to supporting staff following any incident. Resources are available to guide open disclosure and provide practical and emotional support, ensuring staff feel safe and valued throughout the process.

These changes reflect our ongoing focus on creating a safer, more supportive environment for both staff and patients.

Response

For clarity, I will address each question in turn.

1. *The number of assaults against hospital workers in each of the past four years (2022-2025 inclusive) - broken down by month, and by region*

We have provided data on reported assaults by region and month. Please refer to **Appendix One**.

2. *The number of assaults against emergency department staff in each of the past four years (2022-2025 inclusive) - broken down by month, and by region*

We have provided data on reported assaults against emergency department staff by region and month. Please refer to **Appendix Two**.

We consider the apparent increase in reported assaults to be largely the result of improved reporting practices across the country and stronger engagement with staff. Continued encouragement of reporting helps ensure incidents are captured, enables us to apply appropriate controls, and supports our ongoing work to foster a safe and supportive environment for staff.

Violence against staff is not tolerated. Health New Zealand is committed to protecting our people, reducing risk as far as reasonably practicable, and providing support when incidents occur. Every report helps us strengthen our systems and improves safety and wellbeing.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to 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, Health NZ may 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



Sasha Wood

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government



Appendix One

Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora

Please note the following caveats:

- The data reflects all Health NZ staff, not just those located in a hospital. We are unable to differentiate in the data.
- Increases in reported aggression in EDs in Northern & Te Waipounamu are due to the implementation of OV readers. These readers allow staff to swipe that an incident has occurred but do not differentiate when multiple staff have swiped their identity cards for the same incident.

Reported Assaults	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Central Region													
2022							54	74	70	43	42	59	342
2023	83	58	54	61	74	67	95	65	60	92	62	68	839
2024	43	54	78	74	58	85	76	93	76	64	55	97	853
2025	151	71	76	53	76	88	85	83	51	79	60	52	925
Northern Region													
2022							100	116	106	107	128	111	668
2023	160	92	190	146	155	158	158	199	169	139	144	159	1,869
2024	230	178	127	205	165	237	244	281	309	280	319	215	2,790
2025	263	204	241	171	256	213	239	245	225	266	405	200	2,928
Te Manawa Taki Region													
2022							62	40	71	58	69	55	355
2023	70	64	53	71	53	57	70	47	56	64	52	66	723
2024	49	86	116	82	76	73	61	93	77	66	77	86	942

2025	70	80	65	82	102	74	115	98	82	92	94	65	1,019
Te Waipounamu Region													
2022							232	207	245	267	213	319	1,483
2023	320	242	232	254	275	229	263	278	286	227	199	186	2,991
2024	251	248	253	252	244	253	269	283	282	280	246	222	3,083
2025	255	210	230	227	235	195	230	178	195	326	240	191	2,712

Appendix Two

Reported Assaults in ED	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Central Region	11	18	14	7	10	7	28	13	11	11	8	21	159
2022							3	2	2			7	14
2023	4	8	4	2	2	1	10	6	2	1	4	5	49
2024	1	4	3	2	3	5	9	1	4	6		5	43
2025	6	6	7	3	5	1	6	4	3	4	4	4	53
Northern Region	186	148	154	157	145	142	133	175	211	139	203	96	1,889
2022							5	14	26	8	45	21	119
2023	45	19	38	43	37	22	31	43	52	38	44	26	438
2024	100	95	44	81	53	50	51	54	81	57	60	24	750
2025	41	34	72	33	55	70	46	64	52	36	54	25	582
Te Manawa Taki Region	23	16	23	28	33	27	36	67	29	29	35	33	379
2022							3	9	3	8	5	2	30
2023	7	4	5	8	6	6	11	6	2	1	2	9	67
2024	4	6	9	6	5	12	7	23	6	10	17	7	112
2025	12	6	9	14	22	9	15	29	18	10	11	15	170
Te Waipounamu Region	47	44	53	63	68	39	49	51	75	51	51	53	644
2022							4	1	2	3	1	4	15
2023	3	3	3	6	12	9	9	5	7	5	4	10	76



2024	22	13	18	27	24	20	23	31	38	14	18	15	263
2025	22	28	32	30	32	10	13	14	28	29	28	24	290