

Written Parliamentary Questions 28 (2026), 30 (2026), 31 (2026), 35 (2026), 36 (2026), 38 (2026), 41 (2026), 43 (2026), 45 (2026), 49 (2026), 51 (2026), 52 (2026), 57 (2026), 59 (2026), 60 (2026), 61 (2026), 62 (2026), 63 (2026), 64 (2026), 65 (2026), 66 (2026), 67 (2026), 68 (2026), 69 (2026), 70 (2026), 71 (2026), 72 (2026), 73 (2026), 74 (2026), 75 (2026), 76 (2026), 77 (2026).

As the Member may be aware, hospitals across the country were operating with inconsistent escalation rating systems following the previous Government's decision to restructure the healthcare system in the middle of a pandemic in 2022.

Our Government has addressed this by developing a common national escalation framework in 2024 through Health New Zealand. This framework – used by healthcare systems worldwide – is an important part of our focus on building a healthcare system that has patients at its centre.

The framework allows hospitals to respond dynamically to operational demands at any point in time, based on locally defined triggers such as emergency department flow, critical care occupancy, and isolation requirements. When a hospital enters an escalation level like code red, it signals that additional resources should be deployed to that area – not that the hospital remained in code red for an entire day. The system is designed to quickly identify pressure points and apply appropriate resources to resolve them.

This is a responsive, proactive approach to managing hospital capacity that puts patients first.

The following tables show the total number of code red counts at each Health New Zealand hospital. This is different to the total number of code red counts at each hospital's emergency department.

Northern region – RAG status were not recorded until March 2022

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Whangārei Hospital	0	0	0	0
Rural hospitals (combined)	0	0	0	0
North Shore Hospital	1	0	0	0
Waitakere Hospital	1	0	2	1
Auckland City Hospital	0	0	0	0
Starship	0	0	0	0
Middlemore	0	0	0	3
Total	2	0	2	4

Midcentral region – RAG statuses were not recorded until October 2022

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Rotorua	0	1	0	4
Taupō	0	0	0	0
Gisborne	0	94	0	0
Tauranga	0	1	0	1
Whakatāne	0	0	0	0
Waikato	0	13	10	6
Thames	0	4	0	12
Other hospitals	0	0	0	0
Taranaki Base	0	3	0	0
Hawea	0	0	0	0
Total	0	116	10	23

Central region – RAG statuses were not recorded until February 2025

	2025
Hawkes Bay	48
Wairarapa	5
Palmerston North	25
Wellington	48
Hutt	7
Whanganui	0
Total	138

South Island – RAG statuses for all districts were not recorded until February 2025. RAG statuses have been recorded in the Southern district since 2022.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Nelson	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Wairau	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Christchurch	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Ashburton	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Timaru	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Greymouth	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Dunedin	35	8	8	5
Southland	34	23	14	2
Total	69 (only Southern district)	31 (only Southern district)	22 (only Southern district)	27