

26 April 2022

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Re: Official Information Act request – Surgery and Referral Wait Times - ADHB Ref: 20220228-1163**

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 26 February 2022, which we clarified with you on 3 March, requesting the following information:

1. **Please provide the length of time for patients on the waiting list who were referred by their GP to Specialist in Auckland region (incl. count of events and average wait days):**
  - a. Hip replacement
  - b. Knee replacement
  - c. Hysterectomy (or general gynae)
  - d. Breast reconstruction
  - e. Gall bladder
  - f. CT/MRI/PET scan
  - g. colonoscopy
  
2. **Please provide the length of time for patients on the waiting list, who are awaiting surgery in the Auckland region (incl. count of events and average wait days):**
  - a. Hip replacement
  - b. Knee replacement
  - c. Hysterectomy
  - d. Breast reconstruction
  - e. Gall bladder
  - f. CT/MRI/PET scan
  
3. **Could you please provide the average wait time for patients being treated with the following cancers: (include count of events and avg days)**
  - a. Lung
  - b. Breast
  - c. cervical
  - d. Bowel
  - e. Prostate
  - f. Skin
  
4. **Viral patients who have been hospitalized (Ward vs ICU. Count of events, avg days and death):**
  - a. Covid-19
  - b. Influenza

PERIOD:

(a) I request 12 month period from 1 March 2021 to 28 Feb 2022

(b) I request 12 month period from 1 March 2016 to 28 Feb 2017

## Response

We have sought further clarification from you on 4 March and again on 21 March at which time we also wanted to confirm whether you were asking for waitlist data for patients at Auckland DHB surgical services. Your request in Question 1 refers to referrals from "GP to Specialist in Auckland region" and in Question 2 patients awaiting surgery "in the Auckland region."

We have not heard back from you regarding our request to clarify the questions that Mark Fenwick emailed you about on 4 and 21 March and thus have been unable to establish certainty regarding the region question. If we had, we could have discussed a partial transfer of Questions 1 and 2 as the other two metropolitan Auckland DHBs may hold data.

Therefore, without a response, we have decided to answer your request with Auckland DHB data only and close this OIA - noting that our response to Q1 and Q 2 is not regional data. Please contact us if you want to respond to the clarification questions and want to seek information from the other two metropolitan Auckland DHBs [REDACTED]

1. Please provide the length of time for patients on the waiting list who were referred by their GP to Specialist in Auckland region (incl. count of events and average wait days)

### 1.1 General Surgery, General Gynaecology, Orthopaedics

Auckland DHB cannot identify specific surgical procedures from a referral as a diagnosis has not yet been made. The table below counts referrals from GPs to the following specialties, based on referral received date and the date the patient had their First Specialist Assessment.

- General Surgery - encompasses Breast Reconstruction and Gall Bladder surgery as well as other General Surgery conditions.
- General Gynaecology - encompasses hysterectomies as well as other gynaecological conditions
- Orthopaedics – encompasses hip and knee replacements as well as other orthopaedic conditions

Cancer Type	March 2016 - Feb 2017		March 2021 - Feb 2022	
	Number of events	Avg days from referral to FSA	Number of events	Avg days from referral to FSA
General Surgery	3,639	77	2,790	93
General Gynaecology	1,993	72	916	82
Orthopaedics	2,146	103	1,640	94

### 1.2 CT/MRI/PET scan

Please note the tables below show all patients waiting for imaging – PET and MRI referrals can only be made by a specialist and CT will be a mix of community referrals and specialist referrals.

## Combined Priority

	Mar 2016 to Feb 2017		Mar 2021 to Feb 2022	
	Number of Events	Avg wait days	Number of Events	Avg wait days
CT	6,281	21	7,677	30
MRI	5,241	43	6,533	32
PET	402	13	682	14

### 1.3 Colonoscopy

For those still waiting for a scope in 2021/22, the waiting time for those with appointment dates is calculated to appointment date, while those with no appointment have the days waiting calculated up to 31/3/2022.

Priority	Mar 2016 to Feb 2017		Mar 2021 to Feb 2022	
	Events	Average of days waiting	Events	Average of days waiting
Urgent (14 day target)	468	7.7	613	7.5
Non-Urgent (42 day target)	1,834	40.9	2,202	52.3
Surveillance (84 day target)	805	62.1	1,052	87.4

2. Please provide the length of time for patients on the waiting list, who are awaiting surgery in the Auckland region (incl. count of events and average wait days) for hip replacement, knee replacement, hysterectomy, breast reconstruction and gall bladder

Surgery type	Mar 2016 to Feb 2017		Mar 2021 to Feb 2022	
	Events	Average of days waiting	Events	Average of days waiting
Hip replacement	272	140	324	146
Knee replacement	394	151	434	173
Hysterectomy	408	18	470	14
Breast Reconstruction	9	48	3	51
Gall Bladder	208	59	237	87

### 2.1 CT/MRI/PET scan

CT/MRI/PET scans are provided above at 1.2. We are not able to separate out patients awaiting surgery from those that do not as we do not have the available resources required to manually check the volume of patients who require imaging and identify those awaiting surgery.

We are refusing this part of your request because it would involve substantial collation, we do so citing s. 18 (f), having considered whether or not fixing a charge or extending this request's time limit would enable us to answer this part.

3. Could you please provide the average wait time for patients being treated with the following cancers: (include count of events and avg days) for lung, breast, cervical, bowel, prostate and skin

The table below is based on Faster Cancer Treatment data for patients who had their first treatment (either chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery) during the index period as this enables us to extract standardised data.

Patients who are included meet the following criteria:

- eligible for treatment in New Zealand
- their treatment pathway started inside the New Zealand health system
- are under the care of adult services and are 16 or older
- have received treatment for metastatic cancer where the primary site is unknown
- are under the care of adult services and are 16 or older at the date of first cancer treatment
- have received a first treatment (or other management) for cancer that is publicly funded, in the reporting period
- have been triaged as having a high suspicion of cancer and as having a need to be seen within two weeks

Cancer Type	March 2016 - Feb 2017		March 2021 - Feb 2022	
	Number of events	Avg. days waiting from decision to treat to treatment	Number of events	Avg. days waiting from decision to treat to treatment
Lung	472	10	551	9
Breast	227	13	263	14
Cervical	44	19	32	15
Bowel	138	13	167	10
Prostate	269	20	293	36
Skin	116	24	47	15

#### 4. Viral patients who have been hospitalized (Ward vs ICU. Count of events, avg days and death) with Covid-19 and Influenza

The numbers below are based on coded inpatient visits discharged during the index period – patient events under 3 hours are not coded. Cause of death is not reported by hospitals so the patients included in the table below had a coded diagnosis of interest and died while in hospital. Patients who are currently in hospital or who have recently been discharged will not have been coded yet and will not appear in these figures.

Number of inpatient events		March 2016 - Feb 2017	March 2021 - Feb 2022
no ICU stay	COVID		824
	Influenza	417	21
ICU stay	COVID		29
	Influenza	22	<5

Average LOS Days	March 2016 - Feb 2017	March 2021 - Feb 2022
COVID		3.5
Influenza	5.3	3.7

Number of deaths	March 2016 - Feb 2017	March 2021 - Feb 2022
COVID		9
Influenza	<5	0

Where the numbers of patients is less than five, we have protected the patient's privacy from possible disclosure in line with the Health Information Privacy Principles of the Privacy Act by indicating <5.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ailsa Claire'.

Ailsa Claire, OBE  
**Chief Executive**