

23 May 2022

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Re: Official Information Act request – Cancer Data - ADHB Ref: 20220228-1194**

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 26 February 2022 requesting the following information:

**“I would like to know how long wait times were for getting tested for all cancers, after being referred by a specialist or doctor between Jan 2018 - to December 2019. This is for all patients under the Auckland DHB. I would also like to know how long wait times were for getting tested for all cancers, after being referred by a specialist or doctor between Jan 2020 to December 2021.”**

This was clarified to:

**Be clear that you sought not just Auckland DHB domiciled, all patients treated at our cancer services and to have the data for children and adults separated.**

**Response:**

We note that you requested data on wait times for getting tested for cancer, among all patients treated at our cancer services. However, it is not possible to provide the full extent of the data you requested.

This is because patients are referred for a specialist assessment and from that appointment, they are then referred for a range of diagnostic tests or procedures. It is not possible to accurately track patients through those different pathways without reviewing the individual patient notes for all those with a cancer diagnosis who are treated by Auckland DHB and this is not feasible.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of four years and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

However, we can offer the following data as a proxy, based on Faster Cancer Treatment data for patients who had their referral during the index period, as this enables us to extract standardized and complete data.

Faster cancer treatment indicators were introduced in July 2012, requiring district health boards to collect standardised information on patients who had been referred urgently with a high suspicion of cancer. For more on this please see: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/cancer/previous-cancer-initiatives/faster-cancer-treatment>

The data includes patients who 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

Tumour type	Average days between referral and diagnosis by referral year			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Brain/Central Nervous System	37	30	21	30
Breast	43	33	31	33
Gynaecological	46	47	47	45
Haematological	44	36	31	26
Head and Neck	50	46	59	43
Lower intestinal	43	46	55	41
Lung	40	41	35	35
Other	29	173	70	38
Sarcoma	64	53	47	78
Skin	64	41	55	61
Upper gastrointestinal	53	48	39	28
Urological	119	138	125	94

We trust you find this information useful.

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,



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
 Chief Executive  
 Auckland District Health Board