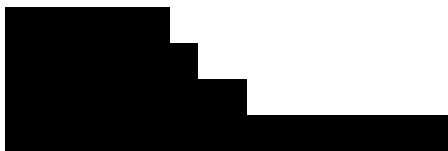


29 March 2019



Dear 

Re: Official Information Act request – cancer care waiting times

Thank you for your Official Information Act request of 5 March 2019 seeking the following of Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) in relation to cancer waiting times:

- 1. The average wait time for patients referred to the DHB with a high suspicion of cancer (all tumour streams) to receive a FSA (first specialist assessment), including the shortest and longest individual wait time, month-by-month for the last 12 months.*
- 2. The average wait time for cancer patients (for all tumour streams) to receive their first treatment (or management), including the shortest and longest individual wait times, month by month for the last 12 months. For your information, this request is designed to work out how long people are waiting for treatment, once it has been determined they have or are likely to have cancer.*
- 3. The number of people diagnosed with cancer after presenting to the emergency department, month by month for the last 12 months.*
- 4. A copy of the DHB's priority assessment protocol (I understand the name of this protocol varies between DHBs) relating to cancer, for each tumour stream.*

Waitemata DHB recognises how important it is for patients requiring cancer treatment to have timely access to high-quality care. We were the first DHB in New Zealand to achieve the national Faster Cancer Treatment target in 2016 and we continue to have a strong focus on this, given the impact it has on our patients, their whanau and health outcomes.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information, which has been extracted from our Faster Cancer Treatment data set (62-day and 31-day patients) submitted to the Ministry of Health between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2018.

- 1. The average wait time for patients referred to the DHB with a high suspicion of cancer (all tumour streams) to receive a FSA (first specialist assessment), including the shortest and longest individual wait time, month- by- month for the last 12 months.**

The most-common reason FSA dates may vary is that each tumour stream pathway is different. A number of tumour streams may order diagnostic tests to be done before the patient is seen, so will not schedule an FSA date until all the information is available and a treatment plan can be made. On occasion, treatment may be first provided at the FSA.

Caution is, therefore, advised in interpreting this data as longer wait times for individual patients should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of capacity to provide a timely FSA.

Average wait time from referral with high suspicion of cancer to FSA – Jan 1 – 31 Dec 2018:

Year - 2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Breast													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	13	13	13	15	13	21	22	13	0	9	26	10	0
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	23	20	22	32	24	26	22	34	27	22	28	34	34
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	16.40	16.20	16.75	21.00	18.50	23.50	22.00	22.50	17.75	18.00	27.33	23.73	20.06
Gynaecological													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	5	8		6	6		6		5	7	6	6	5
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	8	8		28	19		18		22	7	8	16	28
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	6.33	8.00		15.40	10.50		12.00		13.50	7.00	7.00	11.00	10.74
Haematological													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	8	2	2	0	5	6	1	8	3	2	3	6	0
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	8	19	19	13	14	15	11	17	10	21	22	14	22
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	8.00	7.17	6.50	5.33	9.80	9.00	6.00	12.50	5.67	9.67	11.00	9.00	8.23
Head and Neck													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA		4	6	12	19	22	7	8	20	13	10	8	4
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA		18	13	12	19	22	22	24	20	16	16	8	24
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA		11.00	9.33	12.00	19.00	22.00	13.33	15.00	20.00	14.50	13.33	8.00	13.57
Lower intestinal													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	15	7	14	16	8	17	12	18	15	6	0		0
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	25	16	21	22	8	17	16	18	55	14	0		55
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	19.00	12.50	17.50	19.00	8.00	17.00	14.00	18.00	29.00	10.00	0.00		16.27
Lung													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	9	8	12	8	6	11	8	10	9	14	8	7	6
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	17	17	26	39	21	19	19	19	19	24	24	39	39
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	13.90	12.60	16.20	15.75	12.18	14.00	14.56	13.71	13.00	20.00	16.43	20.50	14.72
Other													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA		14		13			19						13
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA		14		13			19						19
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA		14.00		13.00			19.00						15.33
Sarcoma													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA		20				5		11					5
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA		20				5		11					20
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA		20.00				5.00		11.00					12.00
Skin													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	7	14	8	8	14	13	6	5	0	7	9	5	0
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	43	29	36	31	27	43	37	40	38	30	33	31	43
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	21.00	22.15	15.54	19.83	18.50	22.92	17.00	15.44	18.31	15.17	18.06	19.75	18.53
Upper gastrointestinal													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	7		12	6	13		21	16	9	13			6
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	41		12	19	13		21	17	12	14			41
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	17.20		12.00	12.50	13.00		21.00	16.50	10.50	13.50			14.88
Urological													
Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	8	14	7	8	11	7	5	9	7	11	8	5	5
Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	15	14	17	21	13	12	8	50	20	19	24	11	50
Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	12.67	14.00	12.89	12.67	12.00	8.67	6.86	29.50	12.86	14.75	14.86	7.83	12.33
Total Min of DaysFromRefToFSA	5	2	2	0	5	5	1	5	0	2	0	5	0
Total Max of DaysFromRefToFSA	43	29	36	39	27	43	37	50	55	30	33	39	55
Total Average of DaysFromRefToFSA	16.10	15.43	13.83	15.42	14.05	17.79	13.59	16.73	16.21	14.89	16.00	17.33	15.59

- The average wait time for cancer patients (for all tumour streams) to receive their first treatment (or management), including the shortest and longest individual wait times, month-by-month for the last 12 months. For your information, this request is designed to work out how long people are waiting for treatment, once it has been determined they have or are likely to have cancer.

The reason a minimum treatment time is zero is because the first treatment is received on the same day as the decision to treat is made e.g. hormone treatment for breast cancer or urology cancer.

The longer treatment times in the urology tumour stream are predominantly due to slow-growing prostate tumours which do not clinically require urgent surgery.

Average wait time to receive cancer treatment – Jan 1 – 31 Dec 2018:

Year - 2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Breast													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	32	33	36	29	30	36	35	50	31	33	29	32	50
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	13.91	17.32	16.32	14.55	14.26	15.10	14.94	12.04	16.56	14.58	14.79	9.64	14.61
Gynaecological													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	32	27	29	29	29	18	22	29	28	41	27	22	41
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	12.50	12.14	12.30	15.67	14.08	11.00	11.25	14.63	13.25	11.10	15.00	12.20	12.97
Haematological													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	26	35	19	14	28	7	29	21	26	42	8	28	42
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	5.38	7.77	3.47	2.71	5.44	1.62	4.83	3.50	2.32	6.20	2.40	7.29	4.23
Head and Neck													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	48	17	31	37	76	34	31	34	34	49	21	31	76
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	16.78	6.00	11.13	15.40	24.75	15.50	21.43	19.44	7.33	20.25	12.67	17.38	16.22
Lower intestinal													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	34	34	39	37	32	33	30	42	52	31	55	25	55
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	15.23	14.73	15.78	15.16	10.70	11.67	10.65	16.43	18.16	20.83	21.00	11.25	15.32
Lung													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	31	28	46	29	31	31	42	39	41	31	19	31	46
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	14.69	10.67	7.05	6.62	10.82	14.06	9.62	8.58	2.73	4.67	2.70	8.16	8.67
Other													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat		0	0	0	23	0	0		0		0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat		0	2	0	23	0	0		0		0	0	23
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat		0.00	0.40	0.00	23.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00	1.25
Sarcoma													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	18	0	0	5	0	29	0	0	0	26	28	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	23	18	0	0	5	27	29	29	21	33	26	28	33
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	7.67	18.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	7.60	29.00	16.33	11.75	16.50	26.00	28.00	11.84
Skin													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	37	19	36	34	16	22	41	20	33	28	31	33	41
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	4.67	1.88	6.75	7.06	2.00	5.33	9.29	2.00	10.65	6.80	7.47	5.05	5.69
Upper gastrointestinal													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	28	27	41	13	21	27	41	27	52	25	19	8	52
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	10.43	11.07	10.86	6.33	8.50	4.33	10.29	5.47	10.36	7.77	7.29	2.67	8.42
Urological													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	44	40	42	60	77	28	40	50	73	82	28	52	82
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	6.04	6.95	6.83	12.63	12.62	6.33	2.31	5.06	12.67	6.90	4.35	8.43	7.20
Brain/Central Nervous System													
Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0		18	0	0	1	1	2	1				0
Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	4		18	32	21	1	28	2	13				32
Average of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	2.00		18.00	16.00	5.75	1.00	14.50	2.00	7.00				8.20
Total Min of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Max of DaysFromDTreatToFTreat	48	40	46	60	77	36	42	50	73	82	55	52	82
Total Average of DaysFromDTreatToFT	10.29	10.17	9.64	10.46	10.77	9.10	9.07	8.65	10.74	10.99	10.58	8.86	9.94

3. The number of people diagnosed with cancer after presenting to the emergency department, month-by-month for the last 12 months.

This data represents the number of patients tracked through the Faster Cancer Treatment programme who:

- Presented to ED, underwent diagnostics for cancer and received first treatment for cancer; or
- Presented to ED, underwent diagnostics for cancer and were admitted to an inpatient ward for cancer care; or
- Presented to ED, underwent diagnostics for cancer and were discharged with an outpatient appointment to a specialist service for cancer care.

Month	Number of Patients
February	< 5
March 2018	9
April 2018	< 5
May 2018	< 5
June 2018	7
July 2018	5
August 2018	6
September 2018	5
October 2018	< 5
November 2018	< 5
December 2018	6
January 2019	6

A copy of the DHB's priority assessment protocol (I understand the name of this protocol varies between DHBs) relating to cancer, for each tumour stream.

In 2016, the Ministry of Health provided a resource for clinicians for triaging (or prioritising) with definitions to help clarify what constitutes a high suspicion of cancer for the eleven tumour streams https://nsfl.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/high_suspicion_of_cancer_definitions_0.pdf

Waitemata DHB has used this resource since 2016 as our triaging tool for referrals where cancer is being considered. This is used in conjunction with the Ministry of Health Tumour Standards information posted on its website.

Waitemata DHB, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider them.

We trust this reply satisfies your request.

Yours sincerely



Cath Cronin
Director Hospital Services
Waitemata District Health Board