

7 July 2022

By email [REDACTED]

Kia ora [REDACTED]

**Re: Official Information Request – Hospital Wait Times and ED Delays
Te Toka Tumai Auckland Ref. 20220530-1230**

I refer to your official information request received on 25 May 2022, seeking the following information:

- 1. The average wait time to see an oncologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 2. The longest and shortest wait time to see an oncologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 3. The average wait time for cancer surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 4. The longest and shortest wait time for cancer surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 5. The average wait time to see a cardiologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 6. The longest and shortest wait time to see a cardiologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 7. The average wait time for heart surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 8. The longest and shortest wait time for heart surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 9. The average wait time to see an orthopaedic surgeon after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**

10. The longest and shortest wait time to see an orthopaedic surgeon after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
11. The average wait time for orthopaedic surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
12. The longest and shortest wait time for orthopedic surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
13. The average wait time for a gynaecologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
14. The longest and shortest wait time for a gynaecologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
15. The average wait time for gynaecological surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
16. The longest and shortest wait time for gynaecological surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
17. The average wait time for a urologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
18. The longest and shortest wait time for a urologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
19. The average wait time for urology surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
20. The longest and shortest wait time for urology surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.
21. The average wait time for a respiratory specialist appointment/ or general medicine specialist for respiratory problems after a referral from a GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

- 22. The longest and shortest wait time for a respiratory specialist appointment/ or general medicine specialist for respiratory problems after a referral from a GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 23. The average wait time for respiratory surgery after a First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 24. The longest and shortest wait time for a respiratory surgery after a First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**
- 25. The average wait time for a patient visiting the emergency department, for the last five years from 2018 to this year to date.**
- 26. The longest and shortest wait time for a patient visiting the emergency department for the last five years from 2018 to this year to date. All reports discussing hospital wait times and emergency department delays, dated between Jan 2021 to date, held by the DHB.**
- 27. All reports discussing increasing patient transfers between hospitals under the new Health New Zealand model, between Jan 2021 to date, held by the DHB.**

Response

Your first 24 questions centre around the wait times for patient journeys in individual specialties. We have provided the information we have that best answers your questions however it has several limitations. The limitations are mainly due to how our systems record information. The way the data is structured is centred on individual events rather than patient journeys. We can make assumptions about patient pathways by linking events by National Health Identifier (NHI) and overall these assumptions are helpful for understanding patterns in the data.

For your questions about the time from GP referral to seeing a specialist, the wait times in days from referral to a First Specialist Appointment (FSA) is only available for appointments where the referrer type was general practitioner and where the purchase unit code was for an FSA in the same speciality. Between referral and a first specialist appointment there may have been a number of interactions between the specialist team and the referrer, and the patient may have also needed to have investigations prior to the specialist appointment. It is not possible to know without further analysis of the data, for which patients the wait time was clinically appropriate (e.g. being treated in another

specialty) and which were as a result of capacity issues or patient choice. The tables in answers 1 – 24 include appointments occurring up to the end of May 2022.

For your questions about wait times for surgery, it is important to note it is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Patients are referred for a specialist assessment and from that appointment are referred for a range of diagnostic tests or procedures, or they are seen in another specialty.

1. The average wait time to see an oncologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

The following two tables include referrals made to Gynae Oncology, Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology and Paediatric Haematology / Oncology.

Year of FSA	Average of days waiting
2018	21
2019	18
2020	22
2021	25
2022	29

2. The longest and shortest wait time to see an oncologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

Year of FSA	Min days waiting	Max days waiting
2018	0	155
2019	0	195
2020	0	385
2021	0	118
2022	0	83

3. The average wait time for cancer surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

4. The longest and shortest wait time for cancer surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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5. The average wait time to see a cardiologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

The following two tables include referrals made to Cardiology and the Paediatric Cardiothoracic Surgical Unit.

Year of FSA	Avg days waiting
2018	52
2019	60
2020	52
2021	59
2022	53

- 6. The longest and shortest wait time to see a cardiologist after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**

Year of FSA	Min days waiting	Max days waiting
2018	0	1074
2019	0	432
2020	0	1406
2021	0	1296
2022	0	760

- 7. The average wait time for heart surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.**

It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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8. The longest and shortest wait time for heart surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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9. The average wait time to see an orthopaedic surgeon after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

The following two tables include referrals made to Orthopaedics and the Paediatric Orthopaedics.

Year of FSA	Avg of days waiting
2018	92
2019	88
2020	107
2021	92
2022	79

10. The longest and shortest wait time to see an orthopaedic surgeon after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

Year of FSA	Min days waiting	Max days waiting
2018	0	385
2019	0	457
2020	0	763
2021	0	1368
2022	0	622

11. The average wait time for orthopaedic surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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13. The average wait time for a gynaecologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

The following two tables include referrals made to Gynaecology.

Year of FSA	Avg days waiting
2018	79
2019	81
2020	79
2021	80
2022	97

14. The longest and shortest wait time for a gynaecologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

Year of FSA	Min days waiting	Max days waiting
2018	0	258
2019	0	366
2020	0	494
2021	0	419
2022	0	394

15. The average wait time for gynaecological surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

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information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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16. The longest and shortest wait time for gynaecological surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

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17. The average wait time for a urologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

The following two tables include referrals made to Urology.

Year of FSA	Avg days waiting
2018	57
2019	50
2020	55
2021	68
2022	77

18. The longest and shortest wait time for a urologist appointment after a referral has been sent from the patient's GP for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

Year of FSA	Min days waiting	Max days waiting
2018	0	561
2019	0	245
2020	0	322
2021	0	388
2022	0	361

19. The average wait time for urology surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes. Manually reviewing the notes of all patients undergoing elective surgery at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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20. The longest and shortest wait time for urology surgery after a patient's First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

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21. The average wait time for a respiratory specialist appointment/ or general medicine specialist for respiratory problems after a referral from a GP, for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

We don't code for outpatient events so we can't identify General Medicine FSAs that are for respiratory problems. It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

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23. The average wait time for respiratory surgery after a First Specialist Appointment (FSA), for the last five years between 2018 to this year to date.

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We don't code for outpatient events so we can't identify General Medicine FSAs that are for respiratory problems. It is not possible to link FSAs to surgical events without reviewing individual patient notes.

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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.

25. The average wait time for a patient visiting the emergency department, for the last five years from 2018 to this year to date.

Data is for admissions up to the end of May.

Year	Avg time to clinician sign on (mins)
2018	76
2019	82
2020	71
2021	83
2022	92

26. The longest and shortest wait time for a patient visiting the emergency department for the last five years from 2018 to this year to date.

It is not possible to provide this information as it would require manually reviewing the notes of all patients going through the emergency department at Te Toka Tumai Auckland District, which is not feasible. Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of five 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.

27. All reports discussing hospital wait times and emergency department delays, dated between Jan 2021 to date, held by the DHB.

Reports discussing hospital wait times presented to the board are available within the meeting packs of the board and the hospital advisory committee. These are available here: <https://www.adhb.health.nz/about-us/te-toka-tumai/auckland-dhb-pre-1-july-2022/agendas-and-minutes/>

28. All reports discussing increasing patient transfers between hospitals under the new Health New Zealand model, between Jan 2021 to date, held by the DHB.

We are refusing this information citing s18(f) Official Information Act, that the information requested does not exist.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at 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.

Ngā mihi,



Dr Michael Shepherd

Interim District Director

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