



Re Official Information Request – waiting times for cancer appointments

I refer to your official information request of 5 March 2019 and clarified on 12 March for the following information:

- 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 DHBs priority assessment protocol (I understand the name of this protocol varies between DHBs) relating to cancer, for each tumour stream.***

We have provided the information under each of your questions below:

- 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.***

Table 1: Wait time for patients to receive FSA – please note all values shown depict days waiting

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Cancer stream wait days
Brain/Central Nervous System													
Shortest wait time	6		19	2			3		1	1			1
Longest wait time	6		19	16			3		19	29			29
Average wait time	6		19	9			3		12	15			11
Breast													
Shortest wait time	5	9	0	10	0	9	8	2	7	3	2	4	0
Longest wait time	43	50	48	43	41	64	35	51	44	94	294	163	294
Average wait time	20	23	21	26	25	22	15	24	27	25	43	31	25
Gynaecology													
Shortest wait time	3	0	0	6	1	2	1	4	2	1	1	1	0
Longest wait time	19	40	33	23	22	29	26	47	63	25	84	22	63
Average wait time	10	11	9	10	11	10	9	12	12	11	18	11	11
Haematology													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	12	0	0	1	3	7	8	1	11	0
Longest wait time	15	14	21	12	10	19	15	19	19	17	23	11	27
Average wait time	10	9	8	12	7	10	7	13	13	11	10	11	10
Head and Neck													
Shortest wait time	6	3	3	2	0	5	2	1	6	12	3	2	0
Longest wait time	31	36	38	34	17	62	48	43	53	25	62	60	62
Average wait time	15	15	14	13	12	14	13	17	20	17	20	19	16
Lower Intestinal													
Shortest wait time	3	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	5	5	0
Longest wait time	18	27	24	17	20	21	25	44	26	23	75	27	75
Average wait time	11	8	11	8	10	7	9	14	10	10	13	14	10

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Cancer stream wait days
Lung													
Shortest wait time	9	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	9	6	0
Longest wait time	21	18	11	14	20	14	26	34	24	19	38	10	38
Average wait time	12	12	7	8	10	10	13	11	13	9	17	8	11
Sarcoma													
Shortest wait time		14			14	29	24		17				14
Longest wait time		27			28	29	24		17				29
Average wait time		21			21	29	24		17				22
Skin													
Shortest wait time	1	3	2	2	3	0	6	0	0	2	3	13	0
Longest wait time	55	24	43	51	46	49	48	55	42	35	48	56	63
Average wait time	15	13	14	14	13	19	19	15	13	14	22	22	16
Upper Gastrointestinal													
Shortest wait time	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	1	0	2	0
Longest wait time	21	44	14	34	27	11	43	34	13	20	44	52	52
Average wait time	10	11	7	12	10	5	13	11	8	9	14	11	10
Urology													
Shortest wait time	4	0	5	1	4	0	14	5	5	0	2	17	0
Longest wait time	16	33	5	1	29	1	14	23	42	12	20	17	42
Average wait time	10	12	5	1	9	1	14	12	15	6	12	17	10
Shortest wait time by month	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time by month	55	50	48	51	46	64	48	55	63	94	294	163	
Average wait time by month	14	15	13	14	14	15	13	15	16	14	23	22	

- Patients on the Breast and Skin tumour stream have an agreed circa 21 day pathway for FSAs as High Suspicion of Cancer patients.
- Breast patients are required to undergo diagnostic investigations prior to being seen by the service or are seen at the Triple Assessment Clinic where diagnostic investigation procedures and the FSA take place concurrently allowing patients to be seen outside of the agreed 14 day MOH FSA directive.
- The Skin tumour stream has a similar model where patients are seen in the “See and Treat” clinic, where patients are often reviewed, diagnosed, and treated at their FSA appointment.
- Outliers in January and February can be attributed to patients in the Breast tumour stream due to patient DNA’s and multiple requests from the patients to defer their appointment to a later date.

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.*

Table 2: Wait time for patients to receive first treatment based on FCT data - please note all values shown depict days waiting

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Cancer stream wait days
Brain/Central Nervous System													
Shortest wait time		5	0	4	0	16		7	0	0	2		0
Longest wait time		30	6	27	7	16		7	34	6	29		34
Average wait time		18	2	12	2	16		7	16	3	16		9
Breast													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	0
Longest wait time	41	43	27	29	36	19	71	24	32	20	34	55	71
Average wait time	14	14	14	13	16	11	21	10	10	14	19	25	15
Gynaecology													
Shortest wait time	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Longest wait time	32	27	20	176	99	49	27	27	27	28	15	24	176
Average wait time	20	17	10	32	20	14	17	11	11	14	6	14	15
Haematology													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time	4	8	28	22	15	14	15	9	53	6	5	15	53
Average wait time	1	3	5	4	3	2	2	2	8	1	1	2	3
Head and Neck													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time	32	31	23	24	102	26	143	27	116	18	15	68	143
Average wait time	16	16	12	12	28	16	59	20	27	6	7	34	23
Lower Intestinal													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time	29	26	30	73	44	28	61	40	44	29	36	30	73
Average wait time	11	9	8	14	14	11	21	18	14	8	9	9	12
Lung													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time	46	81	31	39	38	40	31	15	45	59	58	27	81
Average wait time	10	13	8	13	8	13	10	6	6	12	20	10	11
Sarcoma													

Shortest wait time	0	15	13		27		3	68	12		6		0
Longest wait time	23	15	20		27		47	68	42		27		68
Average wait time	11	15	17		27		21	68	27		17		21
Skin													
Shortest wait time	0	0	26	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	35	0
Longest wait time	20	33	26	54	12	48	60		33	58	62	35	62
Average wait time	9	14	26	25	4	12	22		12	11	19	35	15
Upper Gastrointestinal													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time	47	32	2	24	28	66	35	30	56	18	34	76	76
Average wait time	12	8	0	9	10	8	11	7	10	7	16	7	9
Urology													
Shortest wait time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longest wait time	97	92	107	170	69	126	202	112	92	115	63	100	202
Average wait time	12	25	13	28	11	24	35	14	17	25	9	15	19
Total shortest wait time by month	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total longest wait time by month	97	92	107	176	102	126	202	112	116	115	63	100	
Total average wait time by month	12	13	10	17	13	13	22	12	13	10	13	13	

- Months which are blank indicate there were no cases that required/received treatment for cancer during that month for that specific tumour stream.

The reason for minimum treatment time being zero is due to the Decision to Treat and Treatment Date taking place on the same day – these are outlined in our business rules and are usually (not always) applied for the following treatment modalities:

- Surgery – day stay procedures in the “See and Treat” clinic, Endoscopic Mucosal Resections (polypectomies)
- Clinical Trial
- Targeted Therapy
- Non-intervention management
- Patient Refused Treatment
- Palliative Care
- Patient died before treatment

The two longest wait times can be attributed to two low risk Prostate cancer cases, one being delayed due to theatre capacity issues and another was a patient choice to delay their treatment until after they had return from an overseas trip. The longest delay in the Gynaecology tumour stream is a Clinical Consideration delay due to a patient developing an infection which needed to fully heal prior to management of their cancer.

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

Table 3: Patients receiving cancer diagnosis following recent ED presentation

ED presentations 2018-19 by month	Total patients diagnosed with cancer following ED presentation
March	30
April	27
May	33
June	17
July	17
August	31
September	17
October	33
November	24
December	17
January	24
February	11

The 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 in the same ED presentation episode; 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.
- Presented to ED, underwent diagnostics for symptoms unrelated to cancer and discharged to an outpatient service where cancer was subsequently diagnosed and treated
- Presented to ED, underwent urgent acute procedure for presenting symptom, findings of cancer only revealed after patient was discharged from hospital

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

- Triaging and prioritisation guidelines are utilised within the different cancer streams and with respect to different types of cancer within these. The information you seek would require extensive collation and research and is therefore declined under section 18(f).

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 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 faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive