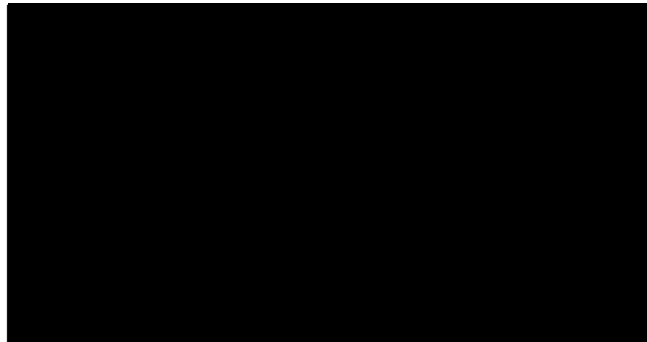


17 March 2020



Official Information Act (1982) Request

On 29 January 2020, we wrote to you in regard to your various Official Information Act requests, received by us on 14 January 2020. You requested information related to elective surgical procedures.

We note that the six requests submitted by you are substantially seeking the same data on seven different surgical procedures, (*Grommets, Hip replacement, Knee replacement, Coronary Artery Bypass, Cataracts, Colonoscopy and Colposcopy*). Consequently, we are managing our response as a single response.

We noted in our initial letter that, having considered the scope of your entire request, and our capacity and ability to provide the data for a response, we could provide some of the information that you have requested. However, this would only be a partial response to your request when considering the information that is able to be extracted from our data system within reasonable operational capacity. We noted this alternative option could be provided free of charge. This alternative approach avoids requiring extended time, prioritising elements of the request, seeking a payment for response, or declining the request due to the large scope.

We asked you to confirm acceptance of the alternative offered, or provide further details to us as soon as possible. Having not received a response from you, we followed up with you by email on 7 February 2020 and then again on 17 February.

On 20 February, Sarah McMahon, Communications Manager – Media and External, then called you.

You agreed we will provide the following to you for the date range 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019:

- The data broken down to **referral source** (GP, other health professional),
- The **priority allocation** by clinician for time to FSA (First Specialist Assessment) on acceptance (groups to 1&2 for urgent and 3-5 for others),
- The **time to attend an FSA** (average days waiting) – noting data on cases exceeding 120 days per speciality are in ESPI data.
- The **time to the procedure completed** (average days waiting) – from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA. This is the ‘decision to treat’ ESPI data.
- The number of patients who have died waiting to have coronary artery bypass.
- The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services – please note that we don’t have this data available as a breakdown by procedure, but we are able to provide the data as a total for surgical procedures.

We asked for written clarification from you on 26 February. While we haven’t received a response, we understand our colleagues at Counties Manukau Health and Waitematā DHB have provided responses to you in similar forms.

In addition, we received an OIA transfer from Waitemata DHB on 24 February 2020 and have also included answers for coronary artery bypass and cataract surgery as they are regional services.

For context, the Ministry of Health (MoH) manages nationally consistent data on elective services performance, and this is publicly available on the MoH website, most recently for October 2018-September 2019, which is close to your specified timeframes:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/september-2019-auckland-espi-trend-and-services-summary.pdf>

These reports show how DHBs are performing, broken down by speciality, against the required MoH targets. They also give each DHB’s referral numbers per month and the percentage of total referrals where the wait is greater than 120 days for the first specialist appointment (FSA) and is longer than the target for the procedure.

This information enables consistent comparison of DHB performance, although we urge caution in benchmarking DHBs in isolation of other factors, such as specialist services, DHB demographics and capacity variables (workforce, theatres etc).

A national comparison of DHBs is available on the MoH website at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/hospitals-and-specialist-care/elective-services/elective-services-and-how-dhbs-are-performing/latest-summary-elective-services-patient-flow-indicators-espis>

The answers to your questions are below.

Please ensure to note the following caveats to the data:

For tables 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A and 7A:

- We only have the data available for referral to the service, we are unable to provide it narrowed for the First Specialist Assessment (FSA) or procedure.

- The number of referrals is to the particular service and not specifically for that procedure.
- The DHB column is the current DHB of patient.
- Declines include patients already known to the service as well as duplicate referrals.

For tables 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B and 7B:

- We only have data available for cases exceeding 120 day wait times for the service, rather than the particular procedure.

For tables 1C, 2C, 3C, 4C and 5C:

- The average days waiting is the time taken from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA, until the procedure is completed.

1) Grommets

For context, there were 514 Grommet procedures carried out in the 2018/19 financial year.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services that we have declined

Table 1A: eReferral data – Paediatric Otorhinolaryngology service

DHB		GP	Other
Auckland	Declines	162	55
	Total Received	1,481	752
Counties	Declines	38	41
	Total Received	101	175
Waitemata	Declines	75	92
	Total Received	1,139	501
Other	Declines	1	46
	Total Received	17	169

The priority allocation by clinician for time to FSA on acceptance

The time to attend an FSA (average days waiting)

Table 1B: FSAs completed by Paediatric Otorhinolaryngology service

Referral Priority	Number treated	Average number of days
Urgent (category A)	863	17
non-Urgent	1,180	47

The time to the procedure completed (average days waiting) - from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA.

Table 1C: Booking system data – procedures completed and the average number of days waiting

DHB	Number of Procedures	Average number of days waiting
Auckland	360	33
Counties	30	37
Waitematā	110	45
Other	14	52
Total	514	36

2) Hip replacements

For context, there were 329 Hip replacement procedures carried out in the 2018/19 financial year.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services that we have declined

Table 2A: eReferral data - Orthopaedic Service.

DHB		GP	Other
Auckland	Declines	1,283	239
	Total Received	5,120	1,306
Counties	Declines	11	7
	Total Received	75	60
Waitematā	Declines	30	16
	Total Received	154	144
Other	Declines	11	14
	Total Received	52	104

The priority allocation by clinician for time to FSA on acceptance

The time to attend an FSA (average days waiting)

Table 2B: FSAs completed by Orthopaedic service

Referral Priority	Number treated	Average number of days
Urgent (confirmed cancer, high suspicion of cancer, priority category A)	73	17
non-urgent (other category)	2,687	91

The time to the procedure completed (average days waiting) - from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA.

Table 2C: Booking system data – procedures completed and the average number of days waiting

DHB	Number of Procedures	Average number of days waiting
Auckland	305	148
Counties	2	107
Waitematā	9	202
Other	13	173
Total	329	151

3) Knee replacement

For context there were 394 knee replacement procedures carried out in the 2018/19 financial year.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services that we have declined

Table 3A: eReferral data – Orthopaedic Service. (Same for both hip and knee replacements as the data cannot be broken down by procedure)

DHB		GP	Other
Auckland	Declines	1,283	239
	Total Received	5,120	1,306
Counties	Declines	11	7
	Total Received	75	60
Waitematā	Declines	30	16
	Total Received	154	144
Other	Declines	11	14
	Total Received	52	104

The priority allocation by clinician for time to FSA on acceptance

The time to attend an FSA (average days waiting)

Table 3B: FSAs completed by Orthopaedic service (same for both hip and knee replacements as the data cannot be broken down by procedure)

Referral Priority	Number of treated	Average number of days
Urgent (confirmed cancer, high suspicion of cancer, priority category A)	73	17
non-Urgent (Other Category)	2,687	91

The time to the procedure completed (average days waiting) - from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA.

Table 3C: Booking system data – procedures completed and the average number of days waiting

DHB	Number of Procedures	Average number of days waiting
Auckland	375	160
Counties	7	252
Waitematā	8	130
Other	4	227
Total	394	162

4) Coronary Artery Bypass

For context, there were 462 isolated Coronary Artery Bypass (CABG) procedures carried out in the 2018/19 financial year plus another 115 performed as part of a more complex procedure for example; a valve replacement or repair at the same time.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services that we have declined

Table 4A: eReferral data – Cardiothoracic Service

DHB		GP	Other
Auckland	Declines	26	20
	Total Received	54	62
Counties	Declines	29	15
	Total Received	57	40
Waitematā	Declines	45	31
	Total Received	90	73
Other	Declines	6	19
	Total Received	10	29

Note that referrals for cardiac procedures (to the cardio thoracic service) are received from cardiologists rather than GPs, and therefore GP referral data is unrelated to the number of patients accepted to the surgical wait list.

Table 4B: FSAs completed by Cardiothoracic service

Referral Priority	Number of treated	Average number of days
Urgent (category A)	94	13
non-urgent	179	29

The time to the procedure completed (average days waiting) - from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA.

Table 4C: Booking system data – procedures completed and the average number of days waiting

DHB	Number of Procedures	Average number of days waiting
Auckland	106	21
Counties	144	16
Waitematā	128	15
Other	114	12
Total	492	16

The number of patients who have died waiting to have coronary artery bypass in the same time period

We are not aware of any patients dying in the period 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019 while waiting to have coronary artery bypass, as our records show no patients cancelled off the waitlist due to death.

5) Cataract

For context, there were 4,368 cataract procedures carried out in the 2018/19 financial year.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services that we have declined

Table 5A: eReferral data – Ophthalmology Service

DHB		GP	Other
Auckland	Declines	831	813
	Total Received	4,207	3,756
Counties	Declines	107	288
	Total Received	447	1,175
Waitematā	Declines	1,172	1,049
	Total Received	6,089	4,004
Other	Declines	111	314
	Total Received	250	786

The priority allocation by clinician for time to FSA on acceptance

The time to attend an FSA (average days waiting)

Referral Priority	Number of treated	Average number of days
Urgent (priority category A)	1,158	17
non-Urgent (Other Category)	7,614	65

Table 5B: Outpatient

FSA's completed for Ophthalmology Service

The time to the procedure completed (average days waiting) - from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA.

Table 5C: Booking system data – procedures completed and the average number of days waiting

DHB	Number of Procedures	Average number of days waiting
Auckland	1,799	67
Counties	78	62
Waitematā	2,440	76
Other	51	63
Total	4,368	72

6) Colonoscopy

For context, there were 3,908 colonoscopy procedures carried out in the 2018/19 financial year.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

Table 6A e-referral data – Colonoscopies

Please note that:

- The data excludes surveillance colonoscopies as these can be several years apart.

Referrer	Auckland	Counties	Waitematā	Other
Other Referrer	1,019	10	18	22
GP	1,238	11	25	5

The number of referrals from GPs to surgical services that we have declined

Please note that there were only 3 declines in our eReferrals system, as patients are referred to the endoscopy Service and then the referral is forwarded to the colonoscopy service from there.

The priority allocation by clinician for time to FSA on acceptance

The time to attend an FSA (average days waiting)

Table 6B: Priority allocation and time to attend FSA (excl. surveillance Colonoscopies as these can be several years apart)

Referral Priority	Number of treated	Average number of days
Urgent (confirmed cancer, high suspicion of cancer and priority category A)	578	6.7
non-Urgent (priority B, C and D)	1,770	55.7

The time to the procedure completed (average days waiting) - from being added to a procedure waitlist after an FSA.

Please note that there is no wait list from FSA to procedure for colonoscopy as the FSA is undertaken by another service and an internal referral is then made.

7) Colposcopy

For context, there were 2,821 colposcopies carried out in the 2018/19 financial year across both inpatient and outpatient settings.

The data broken down to referral source (GP, other health professional)

The number of referrals from GPs to Colposcopy service that we have declined

Table 7A: eReferral data – Colposcopy Service

DHB		GP	Other
Auckland	Declines	164	24
	Total received	1,575	215
Counties	Declines	4	3
	Total received	43	30
Waitematā	Declines	9	5
	Total received	73	50
Other	Declines	3	4
	Total received	28	34

The priority allocation by clinician for time to FSA on acceptance

The time to attend an FSA (average days waiting)

Table 7B: Priority allocation and time to attend procedure (excluding surveillance Colposcopies as these can be several years apart and inpatient procedures as not done at FSA)

Referral Priority	Number of treated	Average number of days
Urgent (confirmed cancer, high suspicion of cancer and priority category A)	35	10
non-Urgent (priority B, C and D)	1,372	100

If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of our proposed approach by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive