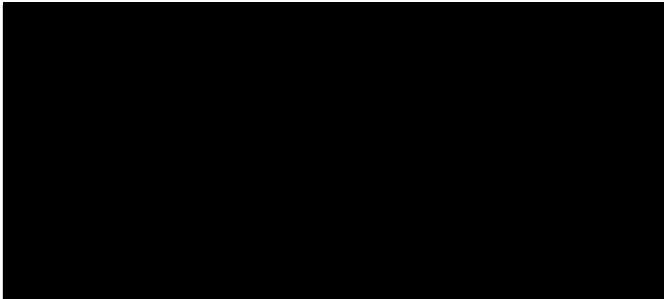


23 September 2020



Re Official Information Request – Wait times for colonoscopies

I refer to your official information request dated 7 September 2020 requesting the following information:

Under the Official Information Act, I would hereby like to request that the Auckland District Health Board provide answers to the following questions:

1. How many patients were on the waiting list for colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?

The number of the patients on the wait list for colonoscopies at the end of each month.

YYYYMM	Waitlist @ End of Month
201808	747
201809	788
201810	861
201811	869
201812	999
201901	973
201902	952
201903	955
201904	937
201905	1032
201906	996
201907	924
201908	955
201909	921

201910	918
201911	995
201912	1110
202001	1115
202002	1168
202003	1252
202004	1428
202005	1398
202006	1304
202007	1119
202008	928

2. What was the average wait time for urgent or category A colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?

The average wait time for urgent colonoscopies by month.

YYYYMM	Average Wait Time (days) - Urgent
201808	5
201809	6
201810	5
201811	8
201812	6
201901	7
201902	5
201903	12
201904	10
201905	5
201906	4
201907	3
201908	6
201909	8
201910	9
201911	6
201912	10
202001	6
202002	8
202003	8
202004	3
202005	7
202006	5

202007	8
202008	8

3. What was the average wait time for non-urgent or category B colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?

The average wait times for routine colonoscopies by month.

YYYYMM	Average Wait Time (days) - Routine
201808	26
201809	32
201810	28
201811	31
201812	46
201901	43
201902	38
201903	32
201904	40
201905	45
201906	38
201907	36
201908	36
201909	38
201910	42
201911	45
201912	49
202001	57
202002	54
202003	57
202004	70
202005	88
202006	79
202007	63
202008	62

4. What was the average wait time for surveillance or routine colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?

The average wait time for surveillance colonoscopies by month.

YYYYMM	Average Wait Time - Surveillance
201808	49
201809	45
201810	51
201811	59
201812	69
201901	77
201902	82
201903	81
201904	71
201905	33
201906	42
201907	45
201908	43
201909	57
201910	58
201911	51
201912	67
202001	69
202002	69
202003	104
202004	78
202005	87
202006	91
202007	94
202008	60

5. What was the ratio between colonoscopies performed for non-urgent patients, versus patients referred through the National Bowel Screening Programme at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020? (If the screening programme has been rolled out in your DHB area).

Auckland DHB has not yet rolled out bowel screening.

6. How many of your patients have recovered from colorectal cancer, versus those that died from the disease between August 2019 and August 2020?

Auckland DHB does not routinely collect this information and to obtain it would involve manually searching the file of each patient. Therefore, we are declining your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

7. How many colonoscopies lead to a confirmed diagnosis of colorectal cancer each month from August 2018 to August 2020?

Auckland DHB does not routinely collect this information and to obtain it would involve manually searching the file of each patient. Therefore, we are declining your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

8. How many categories does your DHB divide your waiting list into? What are the criteria for each category?

We divide our waitlist into 3 categories.

Priorities	Target
1. Urgent Priority	to be treated within 14 days from the referral received date
2. Routine Priority	to be treated within 42 days from the referral received date
3. Surveillance Priority	to be treated within 84 days from the Planned date that is set

The criteria for each category are based on the direct access criteria set by the Ministry of Health. <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/referral-criteria-direct-access-outpatient-colonoscopy-or-computed-tomography-colonography>

9. How many people are presently on the colonoscopy waiting list for each of these categories?

As of 21 September, the total number waiting and average days waiting for a colonoscopy is outlined by category.

Category	Total numbers waiting	Average Days Waiting
Urgent	27	9
Routine	414	53
Surveillance	292	58
Total	733	53

There are a number of factors that are affecting our target result for P2 wait times for colonoscopies. We are experiencing increased demand due to the northern region's rapidly growing and ageing population, as outlined in the Northern Region Long Term Investment Plan. Each year, we carry out colonoscopies for more than 3500 patients, along with other procedures such as gastroscopies, and demand continues to grow.

We are yet to see the full effect of the alert level restrictions that were put in place due to COVID-19, but it is likely these will also have had an impact on wait times.

Our wait list is carefully monitored and patients are prioritised according to clinical need.

We have put in place a number of initiatives to help reduce wait times. These include improved booking and scheduling processes, as well as outsourcing to private providers. We are already seeing improvement.

10. How long is the average waiting time for each category?

See question 9.

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