TE WAIORA Nelson Marlborough Health

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15 May 2019

[redacted]

Response to a request for official information

[redacted]

Thank you for your request for official information received 5 March 2019 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)[1], followed by refinement 12 March 2019, necessary extension of time 9 April 2019 and notice of decision 10 May 2019, where you seek 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.***

Table 1 shows patients referred with a high suspicion of cancer and the count (by month) of patients who have had a FSA – regardless of whether, or not, they had a stop-track date (for any reason) following the FSA (eg no evidence of cancer), from 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Table 1

FSA Month	Count NHI	Average Days Referral to FSA	Minimum Days Referral to FSA	Maximum Days Referral to FSA
Apr	57	13.9	0	42
May	92	14.5	0	45
Jun	63	15.0	1	39
Jul	77	16.4	3	43
Aug	101	16.6	0	71
Sep	81	14.6	0	49
Oct	88	17.8	0	47
Nov	71	18.6	0	58
Dec	78	17.2	0	68
Jan	72	20.0	0	51
Feb	62	18.4	3	44
Mar	67	14.6	0	37
Total	**909**	**16.5**		

[1] Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

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 shows cancer patients who have had a FSA, do not have a stop-track date, and have a definite first treatment (Tx) date.

Table 2

First Tx Month	Count NHI	Average Days FSA to First Tx	Minimum Days FSA to First Tx	Maximum Days FSA to First Tx
Apr	20	13.8	0	60
May	26	17.7	0	49
Jun	25	21.2	0	48
Jul	28	32.4	0	77
Aug	33	35.0	0	107
Sep	31	25.4	0	99
Oct	48	32.2	0	119
Nov	25	43.4	0	112
Dec	25	36.5	0	120
Jan	34	28.6	0	118
Feb	19	25.0	0	71
Mar	28	24.6	0	70
Total	**342**	**28.6**		

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

All Faster Cancer Treatment (FCT) data is for new diagnoses of cancers. Some diagnoses of cancer are not tracked under the Ministry of Health (MOH) FCT rules i.e. metastases and recurrences, Basel Cell Carcinoma (BCC) and Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC) of the skin, bladder cancer stage pTa, other cancers where the level of invasion is determined 'in situ'.

Table 3 shows the number of patients who presented to the Emergency Department where a diagnosis of cancer was made (as per above FCT notes). The data relates to referrals prioritised as having a high suspicion of cancer *and* a need to be seen within two weeks, or less.

Table 3

Month	No
February 2018	5
March 2018	1
April 2018	6
May 2018	1
June 2018	3
July 2018	7
August 2018	7
September 2018	3
October 2018	6
November 2018	5
December 2018	8
January 2019	3
Total	**55**

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.***

NMH is involved with various cancer initiatives under the national cancer programme, including that for priority assessment and treatment as outlined below.

National Tumour Standards
Provisional tumour specific standards inform DHB improvements for service delivery and clinical practice. The Ministry of Health is currently working alongside the sector to replace the provisional tumour standards with a new Standard of care for people affected by cancer. Copies of standards, by tumour type, can be viewed and downloaded on the Ministry of Health website: https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/national-cancer-programme/cancer-initiatives/review-national-tumour-standards

Faster Cancer Treatment
The Ministry introduced FCT indicators requiring district health boards to collect standardised information on patients who had been referred urgently with a high suspicion of cancer.

- 31 day indicator – patients with a confirmed cancer diagnosis receive their first cancer treatment (or other management) within 31 days of a decision to treat
- 62 day indicator – patients referred urgently with a high suspicion of cancer receive their first treatment (or other management) within 62 days of the referral being received by the hospital

Further information about these indicators is available on the Ministry of Health website: https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/national-cancer-programme/cancer-initiatives/faster-cancer-treatment

This response has been provided under the Official Information Act 1982. You have the right to seek an investigation by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602.

If you have any questions about this decision please feel free to email our OIA Coordinator OIArequest@nmdhb.govt.nz

Please note that this letter (with your personal information removed), or an edited version of this letter, may be published on the Nelson Marlborough Health website.

Yours sincerely



Dr Peter Bramley
Chief Executive

cc: Ministry of Health via email: SectorOIAs@moh.govt.nz