

28 July 2021

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Response to a request for official information

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for official information received 31 May 2021 by Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH)¹, followed by the necessary extension of time 29 June 2021 and notice of decision 27 July 2021, where you seek the following information.

Please apply these questions below to the calendar year of 2020 AND 2017:

1. How many people were referred by the GP to the DHB for a joint replacement that year?

NMH response: Referrals are made for a Specialist to assess the patient condition. Our Patient Management System can provide a general indication of the number of referrals we received for assessment where the words 'Hip' or 'Knee' were mentioned in the referral.

The Orthopaedic Specialist assesses the patient and, with the national prioritisation scoring tool, determines if a patient meets the threshold for Major Joint Replacement (Hip or Knee) surgery. Those that meet the threshold are waitlisted for joint replacement surgery.

TABLE ONE

Calendar Year	2017	2020
Number of referrals to Orthopaedics mentioning 'Hip' or 'Knee' for all reasons	828	978

a) Of those [referred by the GP], how many did not receive a first specialist appointment with a specialist orthopaedic surgeon?

NMH response:

TABLE TWO

Calendar Year	2017	2020
Number of referrals* declined	253	191
Number transferred to another healthcare provider	7	19

*GP referral source

¹ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

b) Of those who had their first appointment with the specialist orthopaedic surgeon, how many were then referred/sent back to their GP?

NMH response: Our 2017 Patient Management System did not capture this data. There were 23 referrals in 2020.

c) Of those patients that were referred by GP for joint replacement surgery, how many went ahead to have surgery by the DHB?

NMH response: Referrals are made for a Specialist to assess the patient condition.

There were 429 Joint Replacements in 2017 from all Outpatient referral sources for assessment, including General Practitioners (GPs).

There were 266 Joint Replacements in 2020 specifically from GP referrals for assessment, noting COVID-19 impacted on our 2020 planned care delivery.

d) Of those who were referred by GP and had a first specialist appointment with an orthop[a]edic surgeon, how many actually had their surgery with the DHB?

NMH response: Please see our response for Question 1C.

2. How many patients were deemed clinically necessary to go on a waiting list for joint replacement that year?

NMH response:

TABLE THREE

Calendar Year	2017	2020
Number placed on wait list	588	459

NOTE: COVID-19 impacted on our 2020 Planned Care delivery

a) How many referrals from the GP and specialist for joint replacements were turned down that year?

NMH response:

TABLE FOUR

Calendar Year	2017	2020
Number of referrals* declined	257	197

*GP or Specialist referral source

b) How many were turned down because of 'lack of capacity'?

NMH response: Our Patient Management System does not capture data relating to 'lack of capacity'.

3. Can you specify your DHBs criteria for joint surgery?

NMH response: We use the national prioritisation scoring system.

a) How many points do patients need to get onto the waiting list for joint replacement in your DHB?

NMH response: Please see our response for Question 3, noting the Specialist can also make a clinical decision to override the access score and place a patient on the wait list.

4. How many 'semi urgent' referrals from the GP to DHB for ENT (ears, nose throat) were actually seen by a specialist?

NMH response:

TABLE FIVE

Calendar Year	2017	2020
Number of referrals to Otorhinolaryngology for First Specialist Appointment (FSA)	256	340

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

I trust that this information meets your requirements. NMH, like other agencies across the state sector, supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public's understanding of how we are delivering publicly-funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released. If you feel that there are good reasons why your response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider.

Yours sincerely



Lexie O'Shea
Chief Executive