

Clinical : Surgery Urology  
Proactive Release: 12 November 2019

29 October 2019

9(2)(a)

E-mail: 9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

### Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 10 October 2019. You requested the following information:

1. **The current waiting time for an appointment following a referral from a GP for a prostate cancer initial consultation.**
2. **The current waiting time for a follow-up appointment for a prostate biopsy.**
3. **The current waiting time for a post-biopsy appointment to discuss results and treatment options.**
4. **The current waiting time for a radical prostatectomy following the post-biopsy appointment for persons with a confirmed prostate cancer diagnosis.**
  - *Please only include those patients who undergo prostatectomy surgery who have a confirmed prostate cancer diagnosis, not those who require the surgery for other conditions.*

At Counties Manukau Health (CM Health), all referrals for patients related to prostate cancers are managed consistent with the Faster Cancer Treatment Guidelines, and these cases fit within the '31-day target' timelines from "decision-to-treat" to treatment.

The CM Health median days wait, and the full range of all wait-times as at 24 October 2019 for referral for First Specialist Assessment (FSA), and for follow-up appointments for prostate biopsy, and post-biopsy results appointments are provided below (**Table 1**). We are providing retrospective data from 30 September 2018, as this provides some context to improvements in the last year.

Wait times - Faster Cancer Times (days)	as at 30/09/2018		as at 24/10/2019	
	median	Range (days)	median	Range (days)
<b>GP referral to First Specialist Assessment (FSA):</b> <i>- for suspicion of Prostate Cancer</i>	115	96 - 147	71	15 - 141
<b>For prostate biopsy</b> <i>- post-specialist assessment</i>	43	16 - 90	29	1 - 86
<b>For follow-up, post a prostate biopsy</b>	30	13 - 64	35	15 - 71

Table 1.

Notes:

- Not all patients in this data set of referrals for FSA and biopsy will eventuate with a diagnosis of prostate cancer.
- The data includes all patients referred and graded with a suspicion of prostate cancer, through to follow-up of results, some of which confirm that suspicion, while others results prove to be negative for a cancer diagnosis.
- Our systems do not allow us to differentiate between patient referrals by a confirmed diagnosis, only by referral to services.

With regards to the element of your request on current waiting time for a radical prostatectomy, following the post-biopsy appointment for those with a confirmed diagnosis of prostate cancer, CM Health does not undertake any radical prostatectomy surgery at our facilities. At the time of decision-to-treat with surgery, all patients requiring this treatment are referred to Auckland City Hospital, who will assess referrals for surgery scheduling, and will track wait times to a surgery occurring for patients. We do not hold collated data on the wait times for urology surgical procedures following a referral to Auckland District Health Board, apart from in each individual medical file.

As noted above, it is not possible for our systems to distinguish patients by confirmed diagnoses and procedures, except in individual medical files. Radical prostatectomy surgery is not the only procedure that relates to treatment of these cases. Some men with a confirmed diagnosis do not have surgery; they may choose radiation therapy, an active surveillance approach, or hormone therapy.

There may also be other reasons for a clinician to recommend a prostatectomy, including less common reasons for this surgery which include: inability to completely empty the bladder, very slow urination, recurrent bleeding from the prostate, bladder stones with prostate enlargement, or increased pressure on the ureters and kidneys from urinary retention (called hydro-nephrosis).

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,



Fepulea'i Margie Apa  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Counties Manukau Health**