



2 February 2022



Dear 

**Re: OIA request – Cancelled procedures and wait times**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received as a partial transfer by the Ministry of Health on 8 December 2021, seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about guidelines and protocols for the treatment and management of patients with a number of medical conditions.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,600 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

We contacted you on 10, 15 and 16 December 2021, to clarify the timeframes on your request. On 22 December, you confirmed you were happy to proceed with the amended request, as follows:

- 1. How many surgeries /procedures/assessments have been cancelled across the country in the past year? **You confirmed you wanted the data for the calendar year, for the 12 months to the date your request was received, 8 December 2021.***
- 2. Is it possible to break that number down by month?*
- 3. How many surgeries/procedures/assessments were cancelled in 2019 and in 2017? **We suggested narrowing the scope to figures for the 2019 calendar year to assist us in providing a response at a time when our staff are concentrated on efforts to manage our response to COVID-19 in the region.***

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

- 1. How many surgeries /procedures/assessments have been cancelled across the country in the past year?**
- 2. Is it possible to break that number down by month?**

We have provided a combined response to questions 1 and 2. The following tables provide the number of procedures cancelled in the past year. It should be noted that, where a procedure was still required, the patients were subsequently re-scheduled. Cancellations can occur for the following reasons:

- patient work commitments

- patient not fit for operating theatre
- condition resolved
- patient declined
- patient did not confirm
- patient did not stop medication
- patient intercurrent condition
- operation no longer required
- rescheduled to planned
- seen elsewhere
- transport difficulties
- treated at another DHB
- patient unable to be contacted
- patient unwell
- theatre, staffing, equipment/utilities issues
- hospital COVID-19 protocols
- patient is COVID-19-positive
- patient has no home support
- patient did not arrive
- patient family bereavement
- patient pregnant
- condition resolved
- procedure not required
- acute patients requiring immediate care.

| <b>Table 1: Procedures cancelled in Waitematā DHB hospitals in 2021*</b> |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Jan  | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| 151  | 219 | 219 | 255 | 207 | 245 | 317 | 591 | 297 | 189 | 169 | 148 |

\*These numbers differ substantially to those supplied below for 2019 due to the various lockdown restrictions throughout 2021, particularly in the August –September Level 4 lockdown.

### 3. How many surgeries/procedures/assessments were cancelled in 2019.

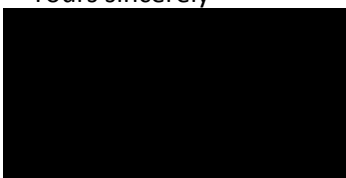
| <b>Table 2: Procedures cancelled in Waitematā DHB Hospitals in 2019</b> |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Jan   | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| 155   | 131 | 139 | 136 | 155 | 151 | 165 | 191 | 174 | 195 | 191 | 160 |

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community 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 consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Executive Director Hospital Services  
Waitematā District Health Board**