



21 February 2022



Dear 

Re: OIA request – Waiting list numbers for skin cancers

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 25 January seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about waiting list numbers for skin cancers.

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.

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

I would like to know the current size of the waiting list for all skin cancer referrals to your DHB as follows:

1. Current waiting list for initial consultation appointment for suspected or confirmed basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) and melanoma.

As at 8 February 2022, the number of patients on the outpatient waitlist for melanoma, BCC and SCC was 379. It should be noted that the service typically sees a seasonal increase in GP referrals over the summer months when people are more likely to notice changes in their skin.

2. Current waiting list for surgical appointment for melanoma excision.

As at 8 February 2022, the number of patients on the inpatient waitlist coded as melanoma was 152. These patients are prioritised and waitlists are reviewed regularly, with an emphasis on reviewing this particular patient cohort.

3. Current waiting list for surgical appointment for BCC or SCC excision.

As at 8 February 2022, the number of patients on the inpatient waitlist coded as BCC or SCC was 697. A large proportion of these patients are allocated to the GP skin lesion scheme (see below). Patients

on the waiting list, and not already part of the GP scheme, will be advised to return to their GP if their lesion changes.

4. I would like to know to what extent, if any, your DHB funds GPs or private providers to carry out any SCC, BCC or melanoma excisions on an annual basis (e.g. for 2021).

In financial year 2020/2021, approximately 70% of the accepted referrals for SCC, BCC and melanoma excisions were sent to the GP scheme where Waitematā-credentialed GPs remove lesions in their own practice.

The GP scheme is highly regarded regionally and within primary care. Patients are triaged by Waitematā DHB's Department of General Surgery and, based on their clinical requirements, are either referred to the GP scheme or to Molemap (a private provider of skin cancer screening services) or seen within Waitematā DHB.

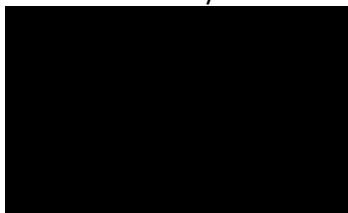
In this timeframe, approximately six per cent of referrals were sent to Molemap.

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**