



**Hospital Services**

North Shore Hospital Campus  
Shakespeare Road, Takapuna  
Private Bag 93-503, Takapuna  
Auckland 0740  
Telephone: 09 489 0527  
Facsimile: 09 486 8339

16 October 2018



Dear [REDACTED]

**Re: Official Information Act request – ‘surgery cancellation rates’**

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act regarding “hospital surgery cancellation rates” at Waitemata District Health Board (DHB). Your request was transferred to Waitemata DHB from the Ministry of Health on 28 September 2018.

Waitemata DHB has the largest resident population of any DHB in New Zealand, currently standing at around 630,000 people. Our district also has one of the country’s fastest-growing DHB populations.

In addition to providing care for the people who live within the Waitemata district, we are the metro Auckland provider of child and adolescent dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

We are the Northern Region provider of forensic psychiatry services and child disability rehabilitation services.

Due to the size of our population and the wide scope of services we provide – in some cases for patients who do not reside within our district – caution is advised in comparing raw numbers of occasions when surgery has been postponed with that of other DHBs.

Responses to your questions are provided below.

- *Does the Ministry of Health, or another agency controlled by the Ministry, collect data on public hospital surgery cancellation rates in the year ended 30 June 2018?*
- *If so, what does that data reveal about cancellation rates by DHB?*

Waitemata DHB’s Surgical Services Division provides orthopaedic, general surgery, gynaecology, urology, otorhinolaryngology (ORL) and a small amount of plastic surgery to our community. These procedures take place in theatres at our North Shore Hospital, Elective Surgery Centre and Waitakere Hospital facilities.

The rate of postponement of surgical procedures attributable to Waitemata DHB is very low as the data provided below demonstrates. We recognise that preparing for and undergoing surgery is a major life event for patients and their whanau. As a consequence, we strive to minimise disruption and uncertainty by only rescheduling procedures when doing so is unavoidable.

---

In the 12 months to 30 June 2018, our services performed 28,145 surgical events, made up of 11,667 elective and 16,478 acute discharges.

During this time, there were 858 postponed surgical bookings, made up of 451 instances where the patient sought to delay (due to being unwell, etc) and 407 where the surgery delay was due to a hospital reason (such as staff unavailable due to sick leave/unanticipated personal leave, priority acute surgical demand).

In situations where a patient's surgery is postponed, we strive to reschedule a new date as soon as possible – ideally on the same day as we contact them advising of the need to postpone. This is based on a clinical assessment of the level of urgency for each individual patient.

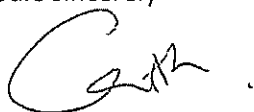
<b>Waitemata DHB surgical postponements</b>		
<b>Surgical events in the 12 months to 30th June 2018</b>		
Elective	11,667	
Acute	16,478	
<b>Total public surgery at Waitemata DHB</b>	<b>28,145</b>	
Patient postponements	451	1.6%
Hospital postponements	407	1.4%
<b>Total postponements</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

I trust that this information meets your requirements. Waitemata DHB, 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 this.

Yours sincerely



**Cath Cronin**  
**Director Hospital Services**  
**Waitemata District Health Board**