



15 October 2018



Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Official Information Act request - cardiac ultrasound waiting times

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received 20 September 2018, seeking information from Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) on waiting times for cardiac ultrasounds.

Please note that Waitemata DHB serves the largest population of any district health board in New Zealand, currently standing at around 630,000 people. We perform more than 4,000 outpatient transthoracic ECHO cardiograms (cardiac ultrasounds) per annum.

Responses to your questions are provided below.

- *What are the waiting times for cardiac ultrasounds at Waitemata DHB?*

Patients referred for a cardiac ultrasound are graded into urgent P1 (completed within two weeks of referral), semi-urgent P2 (longest wait is four months) and routine P3 categories (patients who wait the longest have had a clinical assessment confirming non-urgent status).

- *What is the average time between being referred and getting an ultrasound?*

The average wait time for an outpatient transthoracic ECHO at the end of August 2018 was 12.7 weeks.

- *What is the longest period of time any individual has been waiting?*

The longest wait was 30 months – this patient was contacted but was unable to attend because of other (unrelated) health issues.

- *How many people are currently waiting for cardiac ultrasound and how many are performed each week?*

We have a total of 1,602 patients currently on the ECHO waiting list and approximately 90 outpatient ECHOs are performed each week. Inpatient demand sits at around 60 per week at North Shore Hospital and approximately 20 at Waitakere Hospital – in total around 170 ECHOs are performed each week across Waitemata DHB.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cath Cronin', with a small dot at the end.

Cath Cronin
Director of Hospital Services
Waitemata District Health Board