

31st May 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request for – Surgery Wait Times

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 9th April 2021, you requested the following information:

1. In the past 12 months, what proportion of your DHB patients that were referred to a waiting list by a surgeon, for a joint replacement, were accepted onto the list and got surgery?
2. In 2017 what proportion of your DHB patients that were referred to a waiting list by a surgeon, for a joint replacement, were accepted onto the list and got surgery?
3. Is the DHB able to comment on whether there are enough GPs in the region?

Counties Manukau Health Response:

Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

For context, once an orthopaedic surgeon has reviewed a patient and decided that the patient may benefit from surgery, acceptance to the surgical waiting list is based on meeting a threshold using the following National Scoring Tool questionnaire which is split into two parts:

- The 'Patient Impact on Life' questionnaire completed by the patient. This questionnaire scores on six areas which are; social intervention, personal intervention, ability to fulfil the responsibilities to others, personal care, personal safety and leisure activities.
- The 'Surgeon Derived Impact on Patient' Questionnaire is completed by the surgeon who recommends the patient for surgery and scores the patient on five areas which are impact of pain and functional compromise, likelihood of deterioration in symptoms, consequence of deterioration in symptoms/function, amount of benefit from the proposed surgery and risk of surgery for the patient.

When entered into a Ministry of Health (MoH) electronic system a score is generated based on individual weightings built into the system. The scoring system applies to all orthopaedic sub-specialities and is not specifically for hip and knee.

Patients whose score meets the threshold for surgery, then follow an anaesthetic review process for clearance of medical appropriateness before progress to the surgical waitlist. The figures provided below are based on patients who are accepted (through both scoring tool and anaesthetic clearance), and those declined (reflecting scoring tool declines only, no record of other reasons for not making the waiting list is currently available).

1. In the past 12 months, what proportion of your DHB patients that were referred to a waiting list by a surgeon, for a joint replacement, were accepted onto the list and got surgery?

We do not routinely collect the information requested about referrals by a surgeon for joint replacements and to obtain it would involve manually searching individual files of each patient. We can however advise in 2020 CM Health completed 874 hip and knee joint replacements and declined 53 referrals. This means that 94% of patients referred for a joint replacement in 2020 were accepted.

2. In 2017 what proportion of your DHB patients that were referred to a waiting list by a surgeon, for a joint replacement, were accepted onto the list and got surgery?

As above, we do not routinely collect the information requested about referrals by a surgeon for joint replacements and to obtain it would involve manually searching individual files of each patient. We can however advise in 2017 CM Health completed 736 hip and knee joint replacements and declined 64. This means that 91.3% of patients referred for a joint replacement in 2017 were accepted.

3. Is the DHB able to comment on whether there are enough GPs in the region?

This is not something that the DHB would comment on.

I trust this information answers your request. You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health