



5 October 2020



Dear [REDACTED]

**Official Information Act Request**

You have asked for information about colonoscopy services.

- *How many patients were on the waiting list for colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?*

Please see the response below.

- *What was the average wait time for urgent or category A colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?*

Please see the response below.

- *What was the average wait time for non-urgent or category B colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?*

Please see the response below.

- *What was the average wait time for surveillance or routine colonoscopies at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020?*

Northland DHB provides monthly data to the Ministry of Health on the number of P1 Urgent, P2 Non Urgent and P3 Surveillance colonoscopies performed and waiting each month. As per the Ministry's definition, the colonoscopy data set includes colonoscopy, colonoscopy + gastroscopy combined procedures and flexible sigmoidoscopy and the data table below is inclusive of the above procedures. P1 patients have a target of 14 days, P2 = 42 days and P3 patients are to be seen within 84 days of their due date. The Surveillance totals are shown as the number of overdue patients as per the Ministry's reporting guidelines.

Please see data in the following table

Period	Total Waiting			Average Waiting Days		
	P1 - Urgent Waiting	P2 - Non Urgent Waiting	P3 - Surveillance Overdue	P1 - Urgent	P2 - Non Urgent	P3 - Surveillance (Days Overdue)
Aug-18	13	492	168	12	164	86
Sep-18	20	514	189	13	160	99
Oct-18	36	519	182	17	144	77
Nov-18	23	401	105	17	123	76
Dec-18	14	360	72	15	80	44
Jan-19	15	272	53	12	87	25
Feb-19	18	276	31	12	108	16
Mar-19	15	214	40	11	98	48
Apr-19	12	192	54	13	84	25
May-19	15	204	75	12	77	17
Jun-19	17	206	94	13	83	27
Jul-19	11	201	80	15	54	20
Aug-19	11	228	122	15	84	31
Sep-19	9	242	110	14	61	49
Oct-19	10	278	132	13	62	59
Nov-19	18	253	167	13	74	68
Dec-19	14	270	196	12	79	54
Jan-20	18	288	208	13	79	68
Feb-20	16	305	214	13	83	91
Mar-20	23	346	252	13	100	84
Apr-20	24	373	367	19	73	93
May-20	15	423	446	12	122	103
Jun-20	16	393	455	14	129	137
Jul-20	19	412	483	13	122	134
Aug-20	15	377	499	14	102	99
Current	14	331	535	10	93	92

- *What was the ratio between colonoscopies performed for non-urgent patients, versus patients referred through the National Bowel Screening Programme at the end of each month from August 2018 to August 2020? (If the screening programme has been rolled out in your DHB area).*

Northland DHB has not implemented the National Bowel Screening programme

- *How many of your patients have recovered from colorectal cancer, versus those that died from the disease between August 2019 and August 2020?*

This information is not provided outside individual patient medical files. In order to provide it a full audit of medical files would be required. This would require substantial research and I have therefore decided to withhold this information in accordance with section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. You have a right to complain to the Ombudsman about my decision to withhold this information.

- *How many colonoscopies lead to a confirmed diagnosis of colorectal cancer each month from August 2018 to August 2020?*

This information is not provided outside individual patient medical files. In order to provide it a full audit of medical files would be required. This would require substantial research and I have therefore decided to withhold this information in accordance with section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. You have a right to complain to the Ombudsman about my decision to withhold this information.

- *How many categories does your DHB divide your waiting list into? What are the criteria for each category?*

Patient referrals are triaged by a General Surgeon and categorised into P1-Urgent, P2 – Non Urgent and P3 –Surveillance as per the Ministry of Health guidelines. The following link provides the Ministry's referral criteria documentation.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/referral-criteria-direct-access-outpatient-colonoscopy-or-computed-tomography-colonography>

- *How many people are presently on the colonoscopy waiting list for each of these categories?*

Please see the data listed in the table above.

- *How long is the average waiting time for each category?*

Please see the data listed in the table above.

Northland DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist public understanding of how we deliver our services. This includes proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been provided to you. Personal or identifying information will be redacted from any response published online. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be publicly available we will consider your views.

If you have any questions regarding Northland DHB's response to your information request please contact Liz Inch, Communications Manager, in the first instance. Liz can be contacted by e-mail at [communications@northlanddhb.org.nz](mailto:communications@northlanddhb.org.nz) , by telephone on (09) 430 4100 ext 60518 or 021 730 543.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Nick Chamberlain**  
**Chief Executive**