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Tēnā koe Lucy

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Official Information Request- OIA 14023 Surgery Cancellations

The Whanganui District Health Board (WDHB) has received the partial transfer of your request from the Ministry of Health on 8 December 2021 under Section 14 of the OIA. You requested the following information:

1. How many surgeries /procedures/assessments have been cancelled by WDHB in the past year?
2. Is it possible to break that number down by month?
3. How many surgeries/procedures/assessments were cancelled in 2019 and in 2017.

The Whanganui District Health Board response:

1. How many surgeries have been cancelled by WDHB since 2019?

There are a multitude of reasons why surgeries are cancelled. Outlined below, although not an exhaustive list of cancellation reasons, are the most common reasons for surgical cancellations at Whanganui DHB:-

Hospital reasons

- Unfit for procedure i.e patient unwell
- Need to substitute an emergency case
- Insufficient operating time i.e. earlier case took longer than planned
- Surgeon not available i.e sick leave
- Limited bed availability – i.e winter when Wards are full

Patient reasons

- Patient did not arrive at hospital
- Patient not prepared
- Patient changed mind
- Patient not starved

Miscellaneous cancellations

- Patient going directly to Ward i.e ED admission with other medical issue/s
- Anaesthesia concerns with patient
- Surgeon decision to not proceed on the day
- Procedure abandoned

The following data show cancellations by financial year since July 2019. These are broken down into three categories being hospital reason, patient reason and other reason for cancellation.

Planned surgery cancellations															
SessionSpecialty		(All)													
Sum of Cancelled		Mth													Grand Total
CancellationReason	FiscalYr	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total	
Hospital reason	2019	2	2	1	8	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	20	
	2020	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	15	
	2021	5	10	3	13	7	13	6	1	7	8	12	6	91	
	2022	1	10	5	0	12	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	
Patient reason	2019	13	22	14	12	15	15	16	9	19	11	11	25	182	
	2020	24	20	18	11	12	9	1	4	11	1	5	12	128	
	2021	8	8	8	7	9	4	11	11	8	7	11	6	98	
	2022	14	4	7	8	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	
Other misc	2019	1	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	1	11	
	2020	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	
	2021	3	0	1	1	1	4	0	2	1	0	0	1	14	
	2022	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Grand Total		74	79	59	68	59	58	37	30	48	31	43	52	638	

2. How many procedures have been cancelled by WDHB since 2018?

The following data show cancellations by financial year since July 2018. These are broken down into two categories being hospital reason and patient reason for cancellation. The 'type' of procedure in this data is summarised below.

Diagnostic endoscopy, skin lesion removal, colposcopy and bronchoscopy cancellations.															
SessionType		(All)													
Values		Mon													Grand Total
	YrMth2	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total	
Hospital reason	2018/19	3	1	8	1	3	1	4	2	3	1	1	2	30	
	2019/20	3	2	20	7	2	3	2	4	33	3	6	5	90	
	2020/21	7	6	8	11	10	7	2	2	9	7	7	10	86	
	2021/22	8	26	7	6	12	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	
Patient reason	2018/19	5	4	10	11	9	7	9	7	8	8	3	9	90	
	2019/20	9	13	13	13	10	4	8	8	14	1	6	3	102	
	2020/21	6	10	12	9	7	9	4	11	7	8	6	7	96	
	2021/22	11	5	1	6	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	
Total Hospital reason		21	35	43	25	27	20	8	8	45	11	14	17	274	
Total Patient reason		31	32	36	39	35	29	21	26	29	17	15	19	329	

3. How many assessments were cancelled since 2018?

The following data show cancellations by financial year since July 2018 of surgical FSA clinical assessments. These are broken down into three categories being hospital reason, patient reason and rebooked for cancellation.

Surgical FSA appointment cancellations															
Count of boReferr		Month													
Cancelled by	FiscalYr	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total	
Hospital reason	2018								3	14	4	6	6	33	
	2019	9	11	2	14	13	17	16	8	8	7	12	6	123	
	2020	13	6	18	11	7	7	9	11	4		3	9	98	
	2021	13	18	10	6	9	4	4	6	10	5	6	10	101	
	2022	13	9	8	12	7	2							51	
Hospital reason Total		48	44	38	43	36	30	29	28	36	16	27	31	406	
Patient reason	2018								13	22	16	26	21	98	
	2019	26	50	28	31	35	37	33	18	15	28	39	27	367	
	2020	26	27	28	22	17	15	33	25	23		6	22	244	
	2021	27	28	34	23	31	22	30	27	20	24	26	33	325	
	2022	31	16	29	29	24	9							138	
Patient reason Total		110	121	119	105	107	83	96	83	80	68	97	103	1172	
Rebooked	2018										2			2	
	2019	1				1		1			2			5	
	2020	1	1			2	2	1	1			1	5	14	
	2021	5	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	4	33	
	2022	3	6	5	14	17	29							74	
Rebooked Total		10	10	6	17	21	34	5	4	3	7	2	9	128	
Grand Total		168	175	163	165	164	147	130	115	119	91	126	143	1706	

Notes regarding assessment data

- Rebooked – appointment rescheduled
- Hospital reason and patient reason – referral closed / ended
- Referrals closed / end within 31 days of cancelled appointment

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at:

info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Should you have any further queries about the above information, please contact our OIA co-ordinator Anne Phoenix at anne.phoenix@wdhb.org.nz

Ngā mihi



Graham Dyer

Kaihautū Hauora – Acting Chief Executive
Whanganui District Health Board