

Planned Care Update

To:	Primary Care, General Practice
From:	Jo Gibbs – Director System Delivery Hospital and Specialist Services (HSS)
Subject:	Patients on the surgical treatment wait list >4 months
Date:	16 May 2023

What are we doing?

This update is to let you know Te Whatu Ora's Hospital and Specialist Services (HSS), through district teams, will be sending a letter/email to all patients who have been accepted onto a hospital wait list for surgical treatment and have been waiting longer than four months and less than three years for treatment.

1. What does this mean and when will it happen?

- An individual letter or email will be sent to people in May 2023.
- Te Whatu Ora is transitioning to a nationally consistent approach to reassure people they remain on the waiting list and that hospitals continue to work to schedule treatment for them based on their clinical urgency and available capacity.
- We are also asking people who receive the letter/email to help us update their contact records to assist in improving the quality of our wait list data.
- We are also asking people to advise us if they have received their treatment or no longer wish to receive treatment. If they no longer wish to receive treatment, local teams will arrange a review of the patient's records to ensure the patient's clinical safety is addressed.
- We also recognise the critical role that primary care has in supporting those people in this situation.

2. What other support are we providing?

- We realise that you provide the first point of care to people enrolled with you and that this letter may generate questions or concerns from people in your care.
- To help support you the letter/email requests that people call a specific number if they want to update their details.

3. What do we need from you?

- We want to make this as simple as possible for people and would like your help to support people.
- We have prepared some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that explains things, and this may help you answer questions.

4. What support do you need?

- Thank you for your ongoing support of this process and if we can help you regarding this initiative, please email hssplannedcare@health.govt.nz. If you have any queries regarding a particular patient, please contact your local hospital booking team as you normally would.

Attached is a bit more information on addressing waitlists and the process that has been implemented to communicate with your enrolled patient.

Overview of our Approach

Te Whatu Ora's HSS team is leading three initiatives to address long waiters on to the surgical treatment wait list. These are:

1. Improving data quality and validation. Removing duplicate records on the wait list is the initial activity.
2. The second initiative will remove people reported as waiting over 3 years for treatment from the wait list. This will be done by either correcting the wait list data and removing the patient from the list or, if the wait list placement is confirmed, the person's record will be reviewed clinically, a treatment plan confirmed by 31 May and treatment provided by 30 June. Treatment must be provided with urgency.
3. Targeting people waiting longer than 4 months but under 3 years for treatment. As above, the wait list placement will be validated, corrected if needed and the patient removed from the list.
 - If a person is confirmed as correctly placed on the list, they will receive a communication that acknowledges, and apologises for, the delay, requests any updated patient information and advises them to contact their GP or other health provider to discuss changes in condition or treatment options.
 - This is the first step in developing a proactive, nationally consistent approach to communicating with patients on the surgical treatment and first specialist assessment wait lists. Waitaha Canterbury has contacted their patients separately to this initiative, given their requirements to respond to local demands.

Process for implementing initiative three

People waiting > 4 months and < 3 years

This initiative will validate that each patient should be on the list. If not, the patient's record will be updated and they will be removed from the list.

Each confirmed patient will be contacted, by letter or email to:

- Reassure them they remain on the wait list
- Apologise treatment has not been provided within the anticipated time frame
- Advise them to contact their GP or health provider if their condition changes
- Advise Te Whatu Ora if their contact details have changed
- Advise us if they are unavailable for treatment for a period of time in the next 6 months

The objectives of this initiative are to:

- Initiate a nationally consistent, proactive approach to communications with patients on wait lists.
- Start the development of a suite of communications to be sent to patients on the wait lists at regular intervals to maintain contact:
- Include a nationally consistent approach tailored to local districts' situations indicated by the wait list data.
- Contribute to the validation of current data and ensure the information is complete and accurate

There are two teams working with HSS on this initiative:

These teams are Te Whatu Ora's data and digital Consumer & Population & Identification & Registration (CPIR) team and Whakarongorau Aotearoa. They will support this initiative as required by local districts:

- The CPIR team can support the use of a database and email to contact the patients
 - This approach is well tested, being used during the COVID-19 response and with a number of health campaigns such as immunisation
 - Advice from Te Whatu Ora's privacy office has been obtained to guide the approach used
- Whakarongorau can provide an 0800 number and team to receive the calls from patients who respond to the call to action in the communication they receive from the districts
 - This team is experienced in managing patient calls, triaging any that require immediate hand over to a clinician and making that connection via Healthline, and will have scripts advising patients on how to contact their local district if they have any queries outside the scope of this initiative
 - This team will reduce the impact on hospital district teams of responding to the communication
 - A clear process for the transfer of information between Whakarongorau and the local district teams is in place including a report back to Whakarongorau that the information has been received and acted upon