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RE Official Information Act request CDHB 10707

I refer to your email dated 7 September 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB. Specifically:

Elective procedures, imaging (MRI, CT scans) and mental health appointments delayed under lockdown levels 3 and 4. (Please break this information down into: type of procedure (e.g. surgeries, MRI scans, colonoscopies etc) number delayed, and lockdown level (i.e. 3 or 4)

- 1. How many surgeries, planned procedures, including MRI and CT scans, and appointments were postponed at level 4 and 3?**

The need to postpone booked surgery has been driven by a requirement for people to isolate as per COVID-19 alert levels, rather than by hospital capacity.

In line with the national Hospital COVID-19 Escalation Framework, the Canterbury District Health Board continued to provide acute, non-deferrable and urgent elective surgery during this period.

Decisions about which cases met the criteria to proceed during the lockdown period were made according to an agreed prioritisation schedule based on acuity, and the likelihood of deterioration or loss of function associated with delays to surgery. The process has been closely overseen the Chief of Surgery, consistent with local, regional and national guidelines.

Based on this approach, during the period between 18 August and 7 September 2021:

- 713 planned operations were provided at Christchurch Hospital.
- 101 operations were provided at Burwood Hospital, this is approximately half of the normal volume.
- Operating for Canterbury DHB at the city's private hospitals was significantly curtailed with 29 discharges during this period.

Between 18 August and 7 September there were:

- 359 planned surgical inpatient admissions deferred.
- 23 planned medical inpatient admissions deferred
- 4,691 planned outpatient appointments deferred.
 - 891 were for Allied Health Services;
 - 195 for Older Persons Health or other rehabilitation;
 - 1,907 for medical or oncology services (including endoscopy, further detailed below)
 - 92 for Nursing services
 - 11 for maternity associated appointments
 - 1,595 surgical appointments.

Radiology:

Alert 4: 18 August – 31 August

Alert 3: 1 Sept-7 Sept

A total of **137** MRI outpatients (122 cancelled, 15 DNA) and **355** CT outpatients (300 cancelled, 55 DNA) were cancelled or deferred or did not attend their appointments (DNA) at **level 4**.

A total of **2** MRI outpatients (2 DNA) and **52** CT outpatients (20 cancelled, 32 DNA) were cancelled or deferred or did not attend their appointments at **level 3**.

A total of **216** MRI outpatients and **509** CT outpatients had their CT at **level 4**

A total of **135** MRI outpatients and **419** CT outpatients had their CT at **level 3**

2. How many colonoscopies were delayed at level 4 and 3?

- During the 21 days of level 3 and 4 lockdown 191 Colonoscopies and 117 gastroscopies were provided by Canterbury District Health Board
- 107 outpatient appointments for colonoscopy to be provided by Canterbury District Health Board clinicians were delayed (this includes both in house and outplaced). There were also 57 gastroscopies delayed. Provision of outsourced colonoscopy by contracted providers was also deferred. While cancellation data for the outsourced cases are not available within Canterbury District Health Board's systems it is known that this reduced capacity by approximately 150 procedures during level 3 and 4 lockdown periods.

3. How many mental health outpatient appointments were delayed under level 4 and 3?

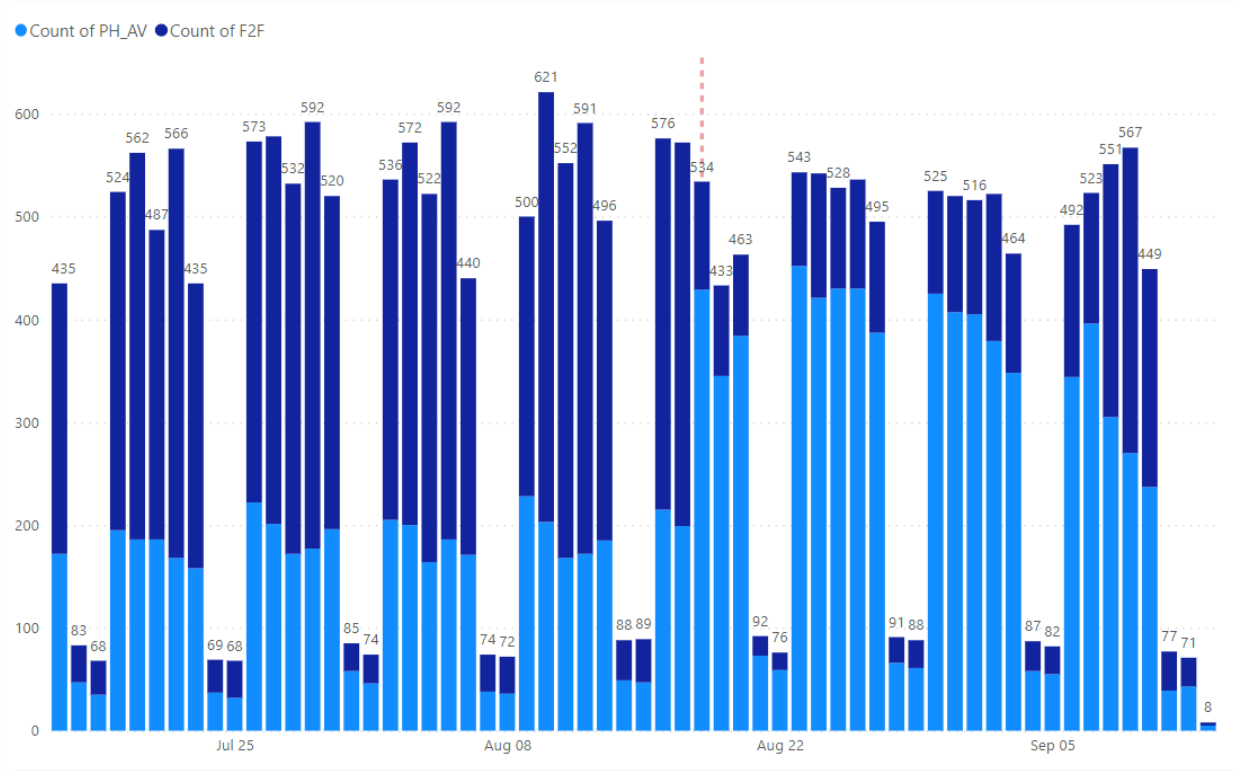
Specialist Mental Health Services' crisis and community teams continued to operate during the lockdown. More appointments were conducted via phone and audio-visual (AV) means e.g. Zoom.

The graph overleaf shows the number of individuals who had contact with Specialist Mental Health Services (SMHS).

The dark purple lines indicate people who had a face to face contact, and the lighter blue lines indicate people who had contact via phone or AV.

The date of the level 4 lockdown on 17 August 2021 is marked with a dashed red line. The reduction in face to face contacts and the increase in phone or AV contacts during the lockdown is clearly visible.

SMHS Unique NHI Daily Contact



Displays the number of individual consumers with one or more contacts for the day by Face to Face and Phone / AV. Enables tracking change in access rates

While the majority of planned appointments still went ahead, some were rescheduled including approximately 100 non-urgent initial assessments. Comparing the period from 18 August to 2 September 2021 to that in 2020, there were 174 fewer contacts recorded in 2021.

4. At the time of the announcement of a second nationwide level 4 lockdown on August 17, was your DHB still dealing with a backlog of planned care due to the first level 4 lockdown which began in March 2020?

At the time of the second nationwide level 4 lockdown on 17 August 2021 the Canterbury DHB was not dealing with a backlog of planned care due to the first level 4 lockdown which began in March 2020.

5. How long do you expect it will take to clear these backlogs (assuming we have no more lockdowns)?

Christchurch Campus:

- Contingent on bed capacity not being constrained due to COVID or other extraordinary demand for hospital beds it is expected that delayed planned inpatient admissions will be completed before the end of 2021.
- Of the 4,691 planned outpatient appointments that were deferred, 2,383 (51%) have already received their appointment or otherwise had the referral or waitlist entry closed.

Radiology:

Canterbury DHB Radiology commenced its recovery plan following the change to alert level 2 in the South Island on 8 September and anticipates it will have cleared the CT and MRI backlogs due to the alert level restrictions by early October 2021.

Older Persons Health (OPH) - Anticipating that within 4 weeks the backlog will be cleared.

Specialist Mental Health Service (SMHS) - We anticipate all delayed mental health outpatient appointments will be completed by early to mid-October.

6. How will you prioritise those people who had their appointments postponed at level 3 and 4?

Christchurch Campus:

- Bookings for Medical and Surgical care are generally offered to people in order of clinical urgency and then length of wait. Patients whose appointments were cancelled will already have waited longer than those more recently referred and will so will naturally be given priority over those with similar clinical urgency.

Radiology:

- Patients referred to Radiology are offered appointments based on their clinical urgency category and then length of wait. Patients whose appointments were cancelled or delayed and have as a consequence been waiting longer will receive priority over those with similar clinical urgency more recently referred.

Older Persons Health (OPH) - Cancelled or postponed referrals and appointments have been re triaged and booked accordingly based on urgency.

Specialist Mental Health Service (SMHS) - People are prioritised according to a number of factors:

- Acuity
- Likelihood of deterioration
- Date of original appointment
- Preferences of the consumer and their family-whānau as to appointment date, time and place

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely



Tracey Maisey
Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support