

February 24, 2021



Access Request: FOI 15-20

Dear Mr. Haubrich:

This is a disclosure letter to your Freedom of Information request (FOI) received by our office on December 1, 2020 and later amended in an effort to reduce the fees for information related to patient deaths while on a wait list for a surgical procedure.

1. Scope of the request

Original request: "Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for a surgical procedure in fiscal year 2019-20. Please break the data out by procedure and case info –date the patient was referred to a specialist, decision date, date for the procedure and date of cancellation. Please also note the government's target time for providing the procedure in question." Timeframe: 2019-2020

Amended request: *Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for a surgical procedure from April 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020 and break the totals out between fiscal year 2019-20 and calendar year 2020. Please break the data out by procedure and case info – date the patient was referred to a specialist, decision date, date for the procedure and date of cancellation. Please also note the government's target time for providing the procedure in question. (Note: many hospitals/health regions were able to identify such cases as they track the reason for cancelled operations)*

1. Requested records which do not exist – N/A

2. Disclosure –

For the period of April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) completed a total of a total of 24,588 surgeries.

Additional procedures would have also been completed in HHS procedure rooms, such as cardiac investigation units and the electrophysiology lab. As these procedures are either non-surgical in nature, or not reportable to Ontario Health or Cor Health, they are not included in this disclosure as they are not responsive to the request.

In addition, this analysis does not include emergency surgeries or trauma-related surgeries as these patients are not placed on the waitlist.

During the relevant fiscal year time frame, 41 patients were removed from the waitlist with the removal reason "deceased." This is a rate of 0.166% for a one year period.

Non-Cardiac Surgery patients

- 31 non-cardiac surgery patients were removed from the waitlist with the removal reason “deceased.”
- 13% had patient related reasons that added to their wait.
- 3.22% of patients elected to defer their surgery date.
- 9.67% of patients were waiting for other medical procedures to be performed prior to their waiting procedure or waiting a predetermined interval period.
- 6.45% of patients had a change in their medical condition precluding their ability to proceed with surgery.
- 27 patients who died while on the waitlist had no patient related reasons noted for their wait.
- No system delays (hospital related resource delays) were noted for any of the patients.

The services which saw greater than 5 deaths on their wait lists from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 were Orthopedic Surgery and Oncology Treatment

Orthopedic Surgery completed 3,819 cases with 10 (0.26%) patients removed from wait list with the removal reason ‘deceased.’

Oncology Treatment completed 2, 123 cases with 6 (0.28%) patients removed from wait list with the removal reason ‘deceased.’

Cardiac Surgery Patients

- 10 cardiac surgery patients were removed from the waitlist with the removal reason “deceased.”
- 7 of the 10 deceased patients (70%) had patient related reasons that added to their wait. Out of these 7, 1 patient who elected to defer their surgery and while waiting, passed away.
- 6 patients or 85% were not medically ready to proceed with their surgery.
- The remaining 3 patients who passed away while on the waitlist, had no patient related reasons noted for their wait.

No system delays (hospital related resource delays) were noted for any of the cardiac surgery patients.

Please see additional PDF attachments containing additional information. A description of the acronyms used in the attached spreadsheets is below.

Acronym Meanings:

DART Dates Affecting Readiness to Treat

DARC Dates Affecting Readiness to Consult

CABG Coronary Artery Bypass Graft

“Cancellation Date” = date HHS became aware of the patient death. Often this occurs through appointment follow up for surgical planning purposes.

Maximum government timelines are based on a prioritization schedule. A patient’s priority ranking can fluctuate during the time they are waitlisted for their procedure in the event of a health decline. As such, we are unable to provide a maximum number.

For Ontario Health and Cor Health, the timeframe between referral and procedure/cancellation covers two wait time periods Wait 1 and Wait 2. Therefore, it is important to consider both waiting periods and related recommended wait times.

Wait 1 - is the time waiting between referral date to surgeon and consultation date.

Wait 2 - is the time waiting between decision to treat (which may or may not equal the consultation date) and the procedure date/cancellation date.

Every procedure has varying recommended wait periods allowed for Wait 1 and Wait 2 as per

Ontario Health and Cor Health.

The surgeon is responsible for choosing the Wait 1 and Wait 2 priority for each patient.

There are 1 of 4 choices available. These choices are shown in the coloured coded columns.

Note that Priority 1 are considered emergent patients

Wait 1 applies to new referrals only

Wait 1 = NA = Recurring or follow up patient

Referral Date = NA = Patient was a follow up patient/existing patient.

Procedure date = NA = Patient was not given a surgery date.

Patient Death is a removal reason from the wait list and does not imply that the death is related to the waiting procedure.

Recommended wait time is an establish wait time set by Ontario Health and Cor Health (for cardiac surgeries)

Wait 1 and Wait 2 Priority noted for each patient represents their priority status at time of removal from wait list. It is not reflective of priority changes that may have occurred throughout the wait.

Patient Related Delay Reasons:

Pre-defined interval follow up - represents a delay where the patient must recover, mature (in the case of pediatric patients) before proceeding with the surgery.

Change in medical condition/patient not fit for surgery/not medically ready, further work up required represents delays due to the patient's condition which precludes proceeding with surgery.

Patient chooses to defer - represents instances where the patient had declined the surgery date provided and requests surgery delay.

Waiting for other procedure - represents delays where the surgery in question cannot proceed until another procedure/treatment is completed beforehand.

3. Fees – Payment of \$450 received on February 11, 2021

4. Appeal

You may appeal the following to the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario by writing to the Commissioner's Office within thirty days of this notice of HHSC's decision. More information about the requirements to appeal decisions under FIPPA is available on the Commissioner's website (www.ipc.on.ca).

Yours,



Privacy and Freedom of Information Office
Hamilton Health Sciences – King West
P.O. Box 2000, Hamilton, ON L8N 3Z5
Tel: 905-521-2100 Ext. 75126
Fax: 905-577-8474

Scope of the request

We understand the request to include:

Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for a surgical procedure from April 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020 and break the totals out between fiscal year 2019-20 and calendar year 2020. Please break the data out by procedure and case info – the procedure and date of cancellation, date the patient was referred to a specialist, decision date, date for procedure and date of cancellation. Please also note the government’s target time for providing the procedure in question.

For Ontario Health and Cor Health the time frame between referral and procedure/cancellation covers two wait time periods Wait 1 and Wait 2. Therefore, it is important for supporting this request to consider both waiting periods and their recommended wait times.

Wait 1 - is the time waiting between referral date to surgeon and consultation date

Wait 2 - is the time waiting between decision to treat (which may or may not equal the consultation date) and the procedure date/Cancellation Date

Every procedure has varying recommended wait periods allowed for Wait 1 and Wait 2 as per Ontario Health and Cor Health

The Surgeon is responsible for choosing the Wait 1 and Wait 2 priority for each patient. There are 1 of 4 choices available.

These choices are shown in the coloured coded columns.

Note that Priority 1 are considered Emergent Patients

Caveats/Notes:

Wait 1 applies to New Referrals Only

Wait 1 = NA = Recurring or follow up patient

Referral Date = NA = patient was a follow up patient/existing patient.

Procedure date = NA = Patient was not given a surgery date.

Patient Death is a removal reason from the wait list and does not imply that the death is related to the waiting procedure

Recommended Wait Time is an Establish Wait Time set by Ontario Health and Cor Health (for Cardiac Surgeries)

Wait 1 and Wait 2 Priority noted for each patient represents their priority status at time of removal from wait list. It is not reflective of priority changes that may have occurred throughout the wait.

Patient Related Delay Reasons:

Pre-defined interval follow up - represents a delay where the patient must recover, mature (in the case of pediatric patients) before proceeding with the surgery.

Change in Medical Condition/Patient not fit for surgery/Not Medically ready, further work up required - represents delays due to the patient’s condition which precludes proceeding with surgery.

Patient Choses to Defer - represents instances where the patient had declined the surgery date provided and requests surgery delay.

Waiting for other procedure - represents delays where the surgery in question cannot proceed until another procedure/treatment is completed beforehand.

Source Systems: Ontario Health WTIS, Cor Health WTIS, Novari

ID	Service Area	Procedure	Wait 1 Priority Level Chosen by Surgeon	Wait 2 Priority Level Chosen by Surgeon	Combined Wait 1 + 2 = Days allowed waiting between referral to procedure date /cancellation	Recommended Wait 1 Time in days for Procedure				Recommended Wait 2 Time in days for Procedure				Referral Date	Scheduled Procedure Date	Cancellation Date	Procedure No longer Required Reason	Wait 1 (Dates Affecting Readiness to Consult) Reasons	Wait 2 (Dates Affecting Readiness to Treat) Reasons
						Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4						
39450695	Orthopaedic Surgery	Shoulder	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	42	84	182	NA	NA	4/11/2019	Patient Death		
37317052	Oncology Procedures	Genitourinary (excluding Prostate)	NA	3	28	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	28	84	NA	01/10/2019	4/9/2019	Patient Death		
33100123	Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery	Breast Reconstructive Surgery	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	28	84	182	10/26/2017	NA	5/16/2019	Patient Death		
35501672	Orthopaedic Surgery	Knee	3	3	174	7	30	90	182	1	42	84	182	05/15/2018	NA	6/19/2019	Patient Death		Change in Medical Status
40031291	Orthopaedic Surgery	Knee	4	3	266	7	30	90	182	1	42	84	182	04/04/2019	06/10/2019	6/3/2019	Patient Death		
38593041	Urologic Surgery	Benign Bladder Surgery	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	28	84	182	NA	03/27/2019	6/27/2019	Patient Death		
39379675	Orthopaedic Surgery	Spine	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	7	56	182	02/06/2019	NA	6/4/2019	Patient Death		
34906828	General Surgery	Hernia Surgery	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	28	84	182	11/27/2017	NA	7/29/2019	Patient Death		Change in Medical Status + Pre-defined Follow Up Interval
39293105	Vascular Surgery	Arterial Bypass Surgery	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	56	182	NA	05/08/2019	8/14/2019	Patient Death		
41305563	Urologic Surgery	Kidney/Renal Pelvis/Ureter Surgery	NA	3	84	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	28	84	182	NA	NA	9/12/2019	Patient Death		
32946949	Orthopaedic Surgery	Knee	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	42	84	182	NA	NA	10/30/2019	Patient Death		
38969031	Vascular Surgery	Arterial Bypass Surgery	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	56	182	NA	NA	10/1/2019	Patient Death		
38969227	Vascular Surgery	Amputation Surgery	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	56	182	NA	NA	10/1/2019	Patient Death		
39920649	Urologic Surgery	Benign Bladder Surgery	NA	3	84	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	28	84	182	NA	05/27/2019	10/11/2019	Patient Death		
38226908	Vascular Surgery	Arterial Surgery (Non-Bypass)	NA	3	56	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	56	182	NA	NA	10/3/2019	Patient Death		Patient Choses to Defer + Other Surgical Procedure
40460609	General Surgery	Hernia Surgery	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	28	84	182	NA	NA	10/1/2019	Patient Death		Other Surgical Procedure + Other Surgical Procedure
41082952	Vascular Surgery	Arterial Surgery (Non-Bypass)	NA	3	56	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	56	182	NA	NA	10/1/2019	Patient Death		

39665509	Oncology Procedures	Genitourinary (excluding Prostate)	NA	2	14	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	28	84	NA	05/27/2019	11/8/2019	Patient Death		
39483642	Oncology Procedures	Genitourinary (excluding Prostate)	NA	3	28	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	28	84	NA	07/24/2019	11/18/2019	Patient Death		
39622508	Orthopaedic Surgery	Hip	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	42	84	182	NA	NA	12/18/2019	Patient Death		
42046562	Orthopaedic Surgery	Shoulder	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	42	84	182	06/14/2019	NA	12/5/2019	Patient Death		
38005269	Orthopaedic Surgery	Spine	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	7	56	182	03/27/2018	NA	1/14/2020	Patient Death		
40047773	Ophthalmic Surgery	Strabismus	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	42	84	182	NA	NA	1/17/2020	Patient Death		
41402111	Urologic Surgery	Benign Bladder Surgery	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	28	84	182	08/16/2019	NA	1/5/2020	Patient Death		
34424882	Orthopaedic Surgery	Spine	4	3	238	7	30	90	182	1	7	56	182	02/02/2018	NA	2/4/2020	Patient Death		
41520382	Urologic Surgery	Benign Bladder Surgery	NA	3	84	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	28	84	182	NA	09/17/2019	2/10/2020	Patient Death		
36655725	Orthopaedic Surgery	Tibia	NA	4	182	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	42	84	182	NA	01/09/2019	2/12/2020	Patient Death		
33093816	General Surgery	Hernia Surgery	4	4	364	7	30	90	182	1	28	84	182	08/31/2017	NA	2/18/2020	Patient Death		
43130127	Oncology Procedures	Digestive System - Colorectal	NA	3	28	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	14	28	84	NA	02/04/2020	2/5/2020	Patient Death		
43319677	Oncology Procedures	Digestive System - Hepatopancreatobiliary	3	3	49	1	10	21	35	1	14	28	84	12/10/2019	02/04/2020	2/10/2020	Patient Death	Pre-defined follow-up interval	
43351392	Oncology Procedures	Gynaecological	3	3	49	1	10	21	35	1	14	28	84	01/08/2020	03/03/2020	2/19/2020	Patient Death		
101199600	Cardiac Surgery	Valve	Unavail	3/30/2019	NA	4/1/2019	Patient Death		Patient Not ready - clinical Reasons (non Medication related)										
101175266	Cardiac Surgery	Valve	Unavail	11/15/2018	NA	5/26/2019	Patient Death		Patient Not ready - clinical Reasons (non Medication related)										
101264092	Cardiac Surgery	Valve	Unavail	8/13/2019	NA	8/13/2019	Patient Death		Patient Not ready - clinical Reasons (non Medication related)										
101168981	Cardiac Surgery	CABG	Unavail	1/2/2019	NA	8/17/2019	Patient Death												
101227368	Cardiac Surgery	Valve	Unavail	6/20/2019	NA	9/14/2019	Patient Death												
101274827	Cardiac Surgery	Valve	Unavail	8/29/2019	NA	10/5/2019	Patient Death		Patient Not ready - clinical Reasons (non Medication related)										
101304210	Cardiac Surgery	CABG	Unavail	11/13/2019	NA	11/19/2019	Patient Death		Patient requested Procedural Deferral										
101309269	Cardiac Surgery	Valve	Unavail	9/27/2019	NA	12/9/2019	Patient Death		Patient Not ready - clinical Reasons (non Medication related)										
101309269	Cardiac Surgery	Aortic	Unavail	11/28/2019	NA	11/28/2019	Patient Death												
101315832	Cardiac Surgery	Other	Unavail	12/17/2019	NA	1/13/2020	Patient Death		Patient Not ready - clinical Reasons (non Medication related)										