

Good afternoon,

On January 17, 2024, you had emailed the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (Agency) to formally request the following information:

*Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for surgery or their first chemo or radiation treatment in fiscal year 2022-23. 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)*

After speaking a few times to clarify the scope of the request, it was agreed on February 7, 2024 that the Agency would informally provide the following information which is currently tracked at the Agency. This information will include the number of persons who died after their date of referral to the Agency but before the first appointment with their oncologist in the 2022/23 fiscal year with diagnosis groupings rolled up cell sizes less than five.

2022/23 Referred Patient Deaths Between Referral and 1st Appointment with Oncologist	
Referring Diagnosis Information	#
Lung	15
Unknown primary/widespread metastasis	13
Liver/pancreas	10
Kidney/bladder	8
Colorectal	7
Breast	5
Other	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

#### **Included in the Chart**

- Referred patients who died following the date of referral while waiting for their first Agency oncologist appointment (either while still on the waitlist or following removal from the waitlist but before their first scheduled New Patient Consultation.
- **NOTE:** Patients who have already been seen by another specialty or were an existing patient now referred to a second specialty (e.g. Medical Oncology patient referred to Radiation Oncology) were not included in this chart.

#### **Context for Interpretation**

- Patients may not be ready to be seen by an oncologist on the date the referral is received – delay reasons include such situations as waiting for additional surgery, waiting for final pathology results in order to identify the most appropriate oncologist to see the patient, the patient is still recovering from surgery etc.
- Patients may be already in a palliative condition when the cancer is first diagnosed and the referral is submitted.
- Not all referrals are for new cancer diagnosed cases. Patients may have been treated in past years and discharged from the Agency but who are now re-referred back with cancer recurrence or progression in an advanced palliative state.
- Because the highest incidence of new cancer cases occur in the population over 60 years of age, referred patients may die of other age-related causes other than cancer itself such as existing co-

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- Not all referrals are for new cancer diagnosed cases. Patients may have been treated in past years and discharged from the Agency but who are now re-referred back with cancer recurrence or progression in an advanced palliative state.
- Because the highest incidence of new cancer cases occur in the population over 60 years of age, referred patients may die of other age-related causes other than cancer itself such as existing co-morbidities (heart disease, dementia, COPD etc.) , surgical complications or advanced age/frailty at diagnosis (e.g. greater than 90 years old) etc.
- There were 6796 persons referred to the SCA (Regina and Saskatoon combined) for a new patient appointment in 2022/23.
- Not all persons referred receive an appointment. Reasons for removal from waitlist include:
  - New Patient Consultation assigned
  - Oncologist triages patient off of waitlist determining oncologist appointment is not necessary
  - Patient/Family declines offer of appointment or is too frail to attend
  - Patient is re-referred at Physician Triage to another cancer center or benign service for care (Hematology/Gynecology)
  - Patient death

I hope that this satisfies your request. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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SecondStreet.org

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