

File Number: FOI24518

August 14, 2024

Kristen Schulz
Sent via secure file transfer to kristen@secondstreet.org

Dear Ms. Schulz:

I am responding to your request for access to records under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act). Your request was for:

Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for either a diagnostic scan or a consultation with a specialist in fiscal year 2023-24.

Please break the data out by procedure and case info – date the patient went on the waiting list, date for the meeting with a specialist or date for diagnostic scan (if scheduled), and date of cancellation.

Please also note the government's target time for providing the consultation or scan in question. (Note: many hospitals/health regions were able to identify such cases as they track the reason for cancelled operations).

Please find attached a record created to respond to your request, while protecting patient confidentiality.

Please note the following to accompany the data and aid in interpretation of the data:

- In Fiscal Year 2023/24, there were 306 patients that had a medical imaging exam cancelled due to a reason of Patient Deceased.
- The reason for patient death is not documented in Island Health diagnostic imaging systems; this report cannot be used to determine a correlation between the imaging exam modality (type of exam) or the wait time for the exam and patient death.
- This report includes medical imaging that were cancelled as Patient Deceased between April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

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- The exam is added to the waitlist as of the received date for the exam orders
- Not all patients receive a scheduled date for the exam while on the waitlist
- Deaths were grouped as either falling within the exam benchmark (varying from 7 to 60 days, dependent on physician assigned urgency) or exceeding the benchmark

With respect to those who may have died while on a waiting list for a consultation with a specialist, Island Health does not have access to this information. Referrals for consultations with a specialist would typically come from the physician's office and this information is not currently tracked by Island Health.

Under section 52 of the *Act*, you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review Island Health's response to your request. You have 30 days from receipt of this notice to request a review by writing to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I have enclosed information on the review and complaint process.

I trust that your request for records has now been satisfied and that no further action with regard to your file is required of this office. If this is not the case, or if you have any questions regarding the matter, please contact me via email.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Luther". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doug" being more prominent than the last name "Luther".

Doug Luther
Information Access Analyst
Records Access Processing and Transparency

How to Request a Review with the
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Pursuant to section 52 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act), you may ask the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review any decision, act, or failure to act with regard to your request under the Act.

Please note that you have 30 business days to file your review with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. In order to request a review, please write to:

Information and Privacy Commissioner
PO Box 9038 Stn Prov Govt
4th Floor, 947 Fort Street
Victoria BC V8W 9A4
Telephone 250-387-5629 Fax 250-387-1696

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's Office with:

1. A copy of your original request;
2. A copy of our response letter; and
3. The reasons or grounds upon which you are requesting the review.

FOI24518 Response Record

Your request was: **Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for either a diagnostic scan or a consultation with a specialist in fiscal year 2023-24. Please break the data out by procedure and case info – date the patient went on the waiting list, date for the meeting with a specialist or date for diagnostic scan (if scheduled), and date of cancellation.**

Please find attached a table created to respond to your request, while protecting patient confidentiality. Please note the following to accompany the data and aid in interpretation of the data: • In Fiscal Year 2023/24, there were 306 patients that had a medical imaging exam cancelled due to a reason of Patient Deceased. We did not provide patient level details, instead grouping by modality (type of exam) and whether the patient was waiting within benchmark at the time of death.

- The reason for patient death is not documented in Island Health diagnostic imaging systems; this report cannot be used to determine a correlation between the imaging exam modality (type of exam) or the wait time for the exam and patient death.
- This report includes medical imaging that were cancelled as Patient Deceased between April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.
- The exam is added to the waitlist as of the received date for the exam orders.
- Not all patients receive a scheduled date for the exam while on the waitlist.
- Deaths were grouped as either falling within the exam benchmark (varying from 7 to 60 days, dependent on physician assigned urgency) or exceeding the exam benchmark.

Caution: Reason for patient death is not documented at Island Health and is unknown. Consequently, this report cannot be used to determine a correlation between the wait time for the Medical Imaging appointment and patient death.

Number of Patients* between April 01, 2023 and March 31,2024				
Exam Type	Number of Patients With Completed Diagnostic Imaging	Patients Deceased During Diagnostic Imaging Waitlist Period		
		Within Benchmark**	Outside Benchmark	Total
Bone Density	11,384	6	24	30
Breast Imaging	41,710	4	4	8
Computed Tomography	98,372	53	84	137
Fluoroscopy	20,924	22	4	26
Interventional Radiology	2,309	9	2	11
Magnetic Resonance	41,116	14	50	64
Nuclear Medicine	9,895	23	15	38
Ultrasound & Vascular	79,421	31	38	69
X-Ray	175,694	1	2	3
Number of Patients*	307,904	143	217	360
*The sum of the individual rows may be higher than the column total due to the aggregation of unique patients. For example, a patient who had both a CT and MRI completed will count as one under each modality, but will only count as one when all modalities are combined. In the example above, of the 360 deceased patients, some were waiting for more than one type of exam, thus, there were 382 cancelled exams.				
**The benchmark for waitlisted exams is unique to the type and priority of exam ordered (e.g. ASAP exams ordered for CT/MRI have a benchmark of 7 days, while Routine exams have a benchmark of 60 days)				

Of the over 300,000 people who received medical imaging services in Island Health during fiscal year 2023/2024, 360 (less than .15 of 1% of patients) died between exam booking date and scheduled exam date. Please note that this is “all-cause” mortality, and it is impossible to determine a correlation between the time waited and the cause of patient death.