

July 15, 2025

Kristen Schulz

Sent via e-mail to kristen@secondstreet.org

Dear Kristen:

Re: Full Disclosure – OUR FILE# NSHA-2025-036

On April 17, 2025, Nova Scotia Health (NSH) received your request under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP Act)*.

We understand your application to be for a copy of the following:

Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for surgery or a procedure in fiscal year 2024-25. Please break the data out by procedure/surgery 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).

The timeframe for this request is April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Please find a copy of the records located in response to your request. We are providing these records to you in their entirety.

We are now closing your file.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

You have the right to seek a review with the Review Officer within 60 days of receiving this decision. Complete details of the process are outlined on the website of the Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner: [Tools for the Public | Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for Nova Scotia](#).

Sincerely,



Rozi Colbourne
FOIPOP Officer
Nova Scotia Health



Privacy Office; Legal Services
108B Charter House
1465 Brenton Street
Halifax, NS B3J 1H1
foipop@nshealth.ca

FOIPOP:

NSHA-2025-036

Request Description:

Please provide data on the number of patients that died while on a waiting list for surgery or a procedure in fiscal year 2024-25. Please break the data out by procedure/surgery 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).

The timeframe for this request is April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

NSH Patients that Died while on Surgical Waitlist Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025				
Procedure	# Of Deaths	Minimum Surgical Wait (days)	90th Percentile Surgical Wait (days)	Median Surgical Wait (days)
Cystoscopy	72	6	407	115
CATARACT EXTRACTION	57	21	307	89
HIP ARTHROPLASTY	18	1	825	316
CYSTOSCOPY/TURB & CYSTOSCOPY/TURP	14	16	387	154
HERNIORRAPHY	14	1	502	193
KNEE ARTHROPLASTY	14	34	1,487	508
Dental Surgery	8	9	1,023	112
LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY	5	24	491	66
URETER- CATHETER/STENT INSERTION/REMOVAL OR DILATION	5	1	220	89
CYSTOLITHOPAXY/ CYSTOLITHOTOMY	<5	34	92	73
INSERTION/REMOVAL VASCULAR ACCESS CATHETER	<5	8	276	88
CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE	<5	88	349	106
ENDARTERECTOMY	<5	22	748	248
REPAIR ANEURYSM	<5	66	875	357
SUPRAPUBIC CATHETER INSERTION	<5	139	270	182
VALVE REPLACEMENT/REPAIR	<5	17	108	42
CLOSURE COLOSTOMY/ILEOSTOMY	<5	259	391	333
DEBRIDEMENT	<5	17	28	23
ESOPHAGOSCOPY	<5	745	884	822
EXCISION DUPUYTREN'S CONTRACTURE(PALMAR FASCIA)	<5	74	97	87
GASTROSTOMY/DUODENOSTOMY/JEJUNOSTOMY W/WO TUBES	<5	14	312	180
KERATOPLASTY/ CORNEAL TRANSPLANT	<5	85	150	121
LAPAROTOMY-EXPLORATORY	<5	48	1,322	756
LITHOTRIPSY/LASER/ BASKET EXTRACTION	<5	5	30	19
NECK DISSECTION (ANY TYPE)	<5	16	30	24
SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY	<5	528	1,825	1,249
TYMPANOMASTOIDECTOMY/MASTOIDECTOMY (ALL TYPES)	<5	915	1,025	976
VITRECTOMY/VITREORETINAL PROCEDURE (removal IO lens, scleral buckle)	<5	8	61	38
AV FISTULA CREATION/REVISION/CLOSURE	<5	112	112	112
BOWEL RESECTION/REPAIR	<5	40	40	40
BYPASS GRAFT	<5	66	66	66
CIRCUMCISION	<5	618	618	618
CORONARY ARTERY BYPASS GRAFT WITH VALVES	<5	6	6	6
CORONARY ARTERY BYPASS GRAFT WITHOUT VALVES	<5	107	107	107
DIVERTICULECTOMY, MECKEL'S/ZENKER'S	<5	3,208	3,208	3,208
ENDOVASCULAR AORTIC ANEURYSM REPAIR (EVAR)	<5	38	38	38
GASTRECTOMY	<5	26	26	26
HEMORRHOIDECTOMY	<5	515	515	515
HIP ARTHROSCOPY	<5	2,484	2,484	2,484
INTUBATION/EXTUBATION	<5	40	40	40
LAPAROSCOPY-DIAGNOSTIC	<5	28	28	28
MYRINGOTOMY WITH TUBES	<5	43	43	43
NULL	<5	30	30	30
OPERATIVE HYSTEROSCOPY	<5	36	36	36
ORTHO BIOPSY	<5	122	122	122
OTHER	<5			
PAROTIDECTOMY	<5	439	439	439
PENILE PROSTHESIS-INSERTION/REVISION	<5	132	132	132
PROSTATE-BIOPSY	<5	150	150	150
PROSTATECTOMY LAPAROSCOPIC	<5	82	82	82
RECONSTRUCTION BREAST FLAP	<5	739	739	739
RECONSTRUCTION BREAST W/ WO TISSUE EXPANDER	<5	1,220	1,220	1,220
REGIONAL LYMPH NODE BIOPSY/ DISSECTION (HEAD AND NECK, ILIO INGUINAL, ETC.)	<5	6	6	6
REPAIR STRABISMUS	<5	124	124	124
SPINE SURGERY	<5	61	61	61
THYROIDECTOMY	<5	116	116	116
TRABECULECTOMY	<5	6	6	6
URETEROLITHOTOMY	<5	159	159	159
VATS APICAL RESECTION	<5	557	557	557
WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY (GASTRIC BYPASS, LAP BAND)	<5	807	807	807
WHIPPLE PROCEDURE	<5	45	45	45
Total	287	1	719	115
Note: In the above dataset we can see that 287 patients died while waiting for surgery among approximately 16,800 patients who were on the waiting list for surgery during the fiscal year 2024/2025. NSH does not have info on cause of death, which is a function of the Medical Examiner’s Office but we can see from the procedures that many individuals were waiting for that there is not an automatic relationship between being on a wait list and cause of death. For example, many people were waiting for cataract surgery, hip or knee replacement, and other similar procedures. We cannot comment on the probability of death avoidance if surgery were performed. It is worthwhile noting that this data is based on our booking system and there are sometimes patients inappropriately left on the system even though a decision has been made by patient and surgeon not to pursue surgery, thus the mortality rate among those waiting may be falsely high.				