



22 April 2022



Dear [Redacted]

INFORMATION ACT REQUEST – EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT WAIT TIMES

Thank you for your recent request seeking information under the Official Information Act 1982. This request relates to wait times in the Emergency Department at Waikato Hospital.

The data covers 1 January 2021 to 23 March 2022.

You have requested the following information:

1. The five busiest days for Waikato Hospital ED so far in 2022 - when they were and how many patients presented on each day?

Busiest Days	Number of Patients Who Presented
3 January 2022	254
6 January 2022	267
17 January 2022	254
10 February 2022	254
7 March 2022	253

2. The five quietest days for Waikato Hospital ED so far in 2022 - when they were and how many patients presented on each day?

Quietest Days	Number of Patients Who Presented
15 January 2022	194
16 January 2022	189
30 January 2022	192
5 March 2022	191
11 March 2022	192

3. Overall for 2021, how many patients presented to Waikato Hospital ED?

82,051

4. Please provide a breakdown by triage category. (*Understood to be for 2021*).

1	2	3	4	5
621	16969	44576	17887	1998

5. How many patients waited longer than six hours? *(This is understood to be 2021 and how many were in the department for more than six hours rather than first waiting for attention).*

27,811

6. Overall for 2021, how many patients presented to each of the following EDs: Thames, Tokoroa, Taumarunui and Te Kūiti?

Hospital	Presentations
Taumarunui	5922
Te Kuiti	2393
Thames	18639
Tokoroa	13161

7. How many people waited longer than six hours at each of those EDs? *(Understood to be for 2021).*

Hospital	Presentations
Taumarunui	155
Te Kuiti	96
Thames	3001
Tokoroa	269

8. During February and so far in March 2022, how many patients presented at Waikato ED?

11,191

9. How many patients were triage category 1 or 2? *(Assuming in set defined in question 8).*

Triage Category	Patients
1	80
2	2386

10. How many patients (of any triage category) waited longer than 6 hours? *(Assuming in set defined in question 8)*

4,393

11. Please provide a breakdown by age and ethnicity of patients who waited longer than six hours. *(Assuming in set defined in question 10).*

Age Range	NZ Māori	Pacifica	European	Other
2022				
0-14	176	10	168	72
15-29	300	29	366	59
30-44	232	26	304	107
45-59	229	33	416	68
60-74	212	28	593	50
75-89	73	8	638	42
90-104	3		142	9

12. Please provide five examples of what these patients were presenting with. (*Assuming in set defined in question 10*).

- Other and unspecified abdominal pain
- Chest pain, unspecified
- Other specified general symptoms and signs
- Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), virus identified
- Unspecified injury of head

13. What were the three longest wait times over the period, and when did they occur? (Date and what part of the day/night). (*Assuming in set defined in question 8*).

Started	Minutes in Department
02/02/2022 9:45	2154
02/02/2022 12:25	2049
15/02/2022 9:22	2008

14. What were the three shortest wait times over the period, and when did they occur? (Date and what part of the day/night). (*Omitting patients discharged with EQ voucher*).

Started	Minutes in Department	Reason for Short Stay
28/02/2022 17:45	1	Self-discharged
04/02/2022 8:12	2	Referred to outpatient clinic
04/02/2022 14:38	2	Self-discharged

15. How many complaints were received about ED over this period? Please provide a breakdown of the reasons, e.g. wait time or ...

Emergency Department Complaints			
Reason	Jan - March 2022	Jan - March 2021	
Staff attitude / behaviour	18	7	
Clinical treatment	25	21	

Please note the above information is identifying the primary reason for the complaint. In total specifically for complaints that mentioned the wait time as well as one of the above factors:

- (Jan to March) 2021 - 17
- (Jan to March) 2022 - 13

16. Over the same period in 2021 (i.e. all of February and to the date in March you used for the above data), how many patients presented at Waikato ED?

12,513

17. How many were triage category 1 or 2? (*Assuming in set defined in question 16*).

Triage Category	Patients
1	85
2	2428

18. How many (of any triage category) waited longer than six hours? (*Assuming in set defined in question 16*).

4,117

19. Please provide a breakdown by age and ethnicity of patients who waited longer than six hours. (Assuming in set defined in question 18).

Age Range	NZ Māori	Pacifica	European	Other
0-14	185	19	221	55
15-29	261	22	302	51
30-44	233	30	300	73
45-59	241	22	360	45
60-74	191	19	588	40
75-89	69	10	658	24
90-104	7	1	160	9

20. Please provide five examples of what these patients were presenting with. (Assuming in set defined in question 18).

- Other and unspecified abdominal pain
- Chest pain, unspecified
- Other specified general symptoms and signs
- Syncope and collapse
- Unspecified threat to breathing

21. What were the three longest wait times over the period, and when did they occur? (Date and what part of the day/night). (Assuming in set defined in question 18).

Started	Minutes in Department
14/03/2021 15:09	2127
04/02/2021 10:07	1809
15/03/2021 14:06	1761

22. What were the three shortest wait times over the period, and when did they occur? (Date and what part of the day/night).

Started	Minutes in Department	Reason for Short Stay
12/02/2021 10:36	2	Sent for dental exam
06/03/2021 11:47	2	Referred to outpatient clinic
18/02/2021 10:12	1	Referred to outpatient clinic

23. How many complaints were received about ED over this period? Please provide a breakdown of the reasons, e.g. wait time or ...

Refer to the response in question 15.

24. How has the Omicron outbreak affected wait times in ED?

While there has been an impact on flow in the ED, there has been no significant increase in wait times as a result of the Omicron outbreak. This is due to continuing to identify issues and mitigate as they have arisen.

MOH Target - 95% of ED Patients Handled Within 6 Hours



25. What percentage of people who presented to ED during February and so far in March 2022 tested positive for Covid?

0.43%

26. What percentage of people who presented to ED during February and so far in March 2022 came to ED because of Covid?

The DHB is refusing this request in accordance with section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist. Presentations to ED are triaged and recorded based on symptoms, not whether positive for COVID-19.

During this time we did undertake screening for all patients attending ED to confirm whether they were "COVID-19 suspected", in which case they would be streamed to a specific COVID-19 "Yellow Zone", however this included patients who presented for a primary reason which was not COVID-19. Further, there were patients who had presented for various symptoms and later returned a positive COVID-19 test.

27. Are any positions in ED currently unfilled? If so, how many and what are they?

SMO = 3.15

RMO = 2.3

This includes the additional five FTE of each that were approved in January 2022. In comparison to last year (even with the vacancy factor), we have more FTE this year.

Senior Nurses = 7.55

Registered Nurses = 12.69

Again, this is inclusive of the additional 14 FTE approved.

28. Anything else you wish to add.

Whilst we have not seen a significant increase in complaints in 2022, there has been changes in the type of complaint that patients find difficult to accept creating tension - these are in relation to the visitor policy and wearing masks.

Waikato DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publically funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

I hope this information covers your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Christine Lowry', with a large, elegant flourish extending to the right.

Christine Lowry
Executive Director
Hospital and Community Services
Waikato District Health Board