

## Memorandum

**TO:** Otago Primary Care Providers  
**FROM:** Urology Department, Dunedin Hospital  
**DATE:** 21 June 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Urology Patient Delays

Kia ora Colleagues,

The Urology department at Dunedin Hospital is currently facing significant capacity constraints, resulting in delays to first specialist and planned care outpatient appointments. This is due to shortages in Urology Consultants, and we are actively recruiting both nationally and internationally.

We are also working with the team at WellSouth on strategies and collaborative solutions.

We acknowledge this also has an impact on primary care capacity and appreciate your ongoing advocacy and care of your patients.

Our key concern is the patients waiting for a First Specialist Appointment (FSA) with high suspicion of cancer and acute functional problems. We are undertaking several diagnostic work streams to better determine the risk profiles of these patient to ensure we prioritise those who are at the highest risk.

Some patients are waiting up to four months for an appointment. We know that waiting for an FSA is distressing for patients and their whānau, and we want to assure you that we are working hard to improve our capacity.

We are currently:

- Reviewing our clinic structures with a focus on improving the patient journey and better balancing demand with capacity.
- Running additional day and evening clinics to see patients, with both permanent and locum staff.
- Updating the haematuria health pathway. Further details to follow.
- Exploring providing advice clinics for GPs.
- Funding MRI-prostate scans as part of a newly created prostate cancer triage pathway.

Please could you:

- Use the Electronic Request Management (ERM) system or contact us directly on the number below if your patient's condition is worsening or there is new, time critical information.
- Phone us directly on 03 470 9422 if you'd like to check on the wait-list status of your patient. Please do not use ERMs for this as our system isn't flexible enough to link this to the original referral. We have set up an answering

message service where you can leave an NHI and our administration team will phone you back with the patients waitlist status.

- Reassure patients we are doing everything we can to address the delays. Please let patients know about any delays, their rights and when to seek advice from us or yourselves.

We are working hard to improve capacity and we appreciate your support as we navigate through these challenges.

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions.



Ngā mihi nui

Hamish Brown

Interim Lead, Hospital and Specialist Services

Te Whatu Ora Southern

**Contacts:**

- Waitlist status check: Urology Outpatients 03 470 9422
- Change in condition or clinical concerns [Mon-Thu]: Linda Smillie, Urology triage nurse: 027 591 0977
- Quality Improvement: Vanessa Bent, Service Manager, Urology: 027 248 0613.