

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 391**  
**Asked on 28 March 2006**

MR ROGERS asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)—

**QUESTION:**

With reference to his surprising claim in Question Time in Parliament that all patients with a cancer are classified as category 1 for elective surgery including all cases of skin cancer—

- (1) Will he provide definitions and a new set of instructions of what constitutes category 1, 2 and 3 surgical cases including the direction that all skin cancer patients are automatically category 1 elective surgical cases?
- (2) How many skin cancer patients are waiting on elective surgery waiting lists and to what categories are they included?

**ANSWER:**

- (1) Queensland Health will continue to comply with the National definitions for Clinical Urgency Categorisation as per the Elective Surgery National Minimum Data Set and definitions established by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Application of the Clinical Urgency Category is the responsibility of the treating doctor. The clinical urgency categories are:
  - **Category 1**  
Admission within 30 days desirable for a condition that has the potential to deteriorate quickly to the point that it may become an emergency;
  - **Category 2**  
Admission within 90 days desirable for a condition causing some pain, dysfunction, or disability but which is not likely to deteriorate quickly or become an emergency; and
  - **Category 3**  
Admission at some time in the future acceptable for a condition causing minimal or no pain, dysfunction or disability, which is unlikely to deteriorate quickly and which does not have the potential to become an emergency.

The statement on 3 April 2006 that all cancers were reported as Category 1 was based on advice received from Queensland Health. The case referred to was classified as a Category 1 patient by the treating medical officer. I apologise if I unintentionally misled the Member.

- (2) I am unaware of how many skin cancer patients are on the elective surgery waiting list. However, I am advised that as at 1 January 2006 there were 414 Category 1 'long wait' patients of which 65 were waiting for Plastic and Reconstructive surgery. The majority of these patients were recorded as waiting for 'removal of skin lesion/flap/graft'. I am further advised that the majority of these patients will have some form of skin cancer.