

Question on Notice

No. 100

Asked on 6 February 2020

MS R BATES asked the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (HON DR S MILES) –

QUESTION

Will the Minister provide the longest time that a patient is currently waiting for category 1, 2 and 3 elective surgery in each hospital and health service in Queensland?

ANSWER

Queensland Health publicly reports hospital performance on the Hospital Performance website. The website outlines a range of elective surgery information across multiple indicators.

The national reporting standards are national guidelines indicate that the median wait time and the 90th percentile wait time are appropriate measures when reporting on wait times. Historical data is also available on the Queensland Government Open Data Portal for all reporting facilities.

The Department of Health has advised that it is not appropriate to provide the specific information sought by the Member for the following reasons:

- That one patient may be able to be identified within their community if their waiting time is exceptional, and they are in an area with small numbers of patients waiting for elective surgery. The Queensland Information Privacy Act (2009) outlines information privacy principles designed to protect the privacy of individuals and describes Queensland Health's obligation to use information about individuals only for relevant purposes. It is able to apply limits on information disclosure and is at risk of penalty for breaches. Publishing information on a cohort of one patient would represent an unacceptable risk.
- That one patient may be a statistical outlier, meaning their wait time may be remarkably different to other patients. This means their wait time is not indicative of most patients, and therefore not indicative of the performance of a Hospital and Health Service (HHS).
- If a patient is "not ready for surgery" for a period of time and then becomes "ready for surgery", their wait time is reported from when they were originally added to the wait list, and not from when they became ready for surgery. This means their wait time is not indicative of patients who are ready for surgery when they are added to the wait list, and therefore not indicative of the performance of a HHS.
- That one patient may have waited longer than other patients because of exceptional circumstances, such as they have other serious conditions or require a highly specialised procedure or care team.