

Róisín Shortall TD
 Social Democrats
 Leinster House
 Kildare Street
 Dublin 2

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7th February 2023

Re.

PQ3692/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who started chemotherapy by month in each of the years 2019 to 2022, in tabular form.

PQ3693/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons attending chemotherapy within the recommended timeframe by month in each of the years 2019 to 2022.

PQ3694/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who are currently waiting to access chemotherapy; and the number and proportion of whom are waiting longer than the recommended timeframe.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) collects limited summary data on systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT).

For patients receiving a new parenteral systemic therapy in the day ward setting, the recommended timeline standard between the date that it is agreed that the patient is deemed ready to treat and the administration of the new parenteral systemic therapy will not exceed 15 working days. The recommended target for operational compliance is 90% as approximately 10% of patients can be expected to have more complex needs that confound or delay treatment.

The number of patients who received a new parenteral systemic therapy in the day ward setting and proportion treated within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat is tabulated as follows:

Medical Oncology	Target	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Number of patients receiving new systemic parenteral treatment in the day ward setting</i>														
2019	*	8,252	711	685	653	697	800	635	800	657	660	653	725	576
2020	*	7,683	742	632	597	571	623	601	652	625	667	654	719	600
2021	*	8,147	665	604	735	731	661	686	676	682	683	677	733	614
2022	*	8,219	667	698	708	645	734	710	642	710	663	724	749	569
<i>Commenced treatment within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat</i>														
2019	90%	89.8%	86.2%	88.3%	90.0%	90.2%	89.9%	89.8%	90.6%	90.0%	91.2%	91.1%	89.4%	91.3%
2020	90%	90.4%	86.1%	89.7%	90.6%	91.6%	92.3%	92.5%	92.3%	89.0%	90.6%	90.2%	88.7%	92.0%
2021	90%	87.0%	82.3%	86.6%	87.6%	85.5%	89.0%	86.2%	87.7%	89.0%	89.9%	89.2%	86.1%	85.3%
2022	90%	86.6%	85.8%	88.0%	89.8%	85.4%	87.9%	87.0%	89.9%	89.9%	86.3%	83.4%	82.9%	82.6%

New parenteral systemic therapy means a new patient starting a regimen, or a patient starting a new regimen who previously had cancer or a patient who has had a change in regimen than involves additional new drugs.

New parenteral systemic therapy excludes patients who are on their 2nd or 3rd cycle, even if new to the hospital, and patients who reduce the number of drugs used in the regimen.

Please note the following caveats when interpreting the data:

- SACT treatment of new patients starting systemic parenteral treatment in the day ward setting is only a small subset of overall chemotherapy activity i.e. it does not include patients continuing treatment or any patients on Oral Anti-cancer Medications (OAMs).
- Parenteral SACT dayward activity that was outsourced to private facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020/2021 may not be included in these figures.
- Data for 2022 may not be complete for all submitting hospitals and is subject to change.

PQ3694/23 - The NCCP cannot comment on the number of patients currently waiting to access chemotherapy as SACT treatment data is retrospectively collected by the NCCP. However, for those patients who recently started SACT treatment in October to December 2022, the 15 working day treatment key performance indicator (KPI) was 83% with the remainder of patients treated within ~23 working days. Wait times longer than this would be related to medical reasons rather than capacity.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Heckmann
Assistant National Director
National Cancer Control Programme

