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Re:

**PQ 9930/24: To ask the Minister for Health the degree to which cancer patients awaiting treatment are able to receive treatment as and when required; the extent of any waiting lists in this category; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Durkan,

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) collect summary key performance indicators (KPI) that measure timeliness of treatment for cancer patients for radiotherapy and for systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT). Although waiting lists are unavailable to the NCCP, the timeliness of treatment KPIs for radiotherapy and SACT are presented below and allow for some assessment of the degree to which cancer patients awaiting treatment are able to receive treatment as and when required.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) key performance indicator (KPI) that measures time to treatment for radiation oncology is defined as follows:

*The proportion of patients completing radical radiation therapy (excluding palliative radiation therapy) that commenced treatment within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat; target 90%.*

The KPI is operational in nature and does not necessarily reflect tumour-specific category of risk. Patients are prioritised based on clinical need and processes are in place to maximise slot utilisation between centres. Tabulated data for the radiotherapy KPI is given below for the first six months of 2023 (more recent data is not yet validated).

*Table 1 Number completing Radical Treatment and percentage who commenced treatment within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat, nationally by month, first six months of 2023 (Target 90%)*

Radiation Oncology	Metric	Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '23	Apr '23	May '23	Jun '23
National	%	63.9%	63.3%	63.9%	62.7%	68.0%	64.3%
	N	529 >	477 >	587 >	440 >	540 >	541 >

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) also 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. Tabulated data for the SACT KPI is given below for the first six months of 2023 (more recent data is not yet validated).

*Table 2 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, nationally by month for the first six months of 2023 (Target 90%)*

<b>National</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Jan '23</b>	<b>Feb '23</b>	<b>Mar '23</b>	<b>Apr '23</b>	<b>May '23</b>	<b>Jun '23</b>
<b>Grand</b>	%	83%	86%	87%	87%	90%	88%
<b>Total</b>	N	804	712	762	747	771	726

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 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, even if new to the hospital, and patients who reduce the number of drugs used in the regimen.

SACT treatment of new patients starting systemic parenteral treatment in the day ward setting is a small but important subset of overall chemotherapy activity i.e. it does not include patients continuing treatment or any patients on Oral Anti-cancer Medications (OAMs).

Yours sincerely,



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