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Re.

PQ 41095/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on the waiting lists for cancer screening and cancer treatment at year end in each of the past ten years.

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

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 where it is noted that the recording of this KPI only started in 2017:

Radiation Oncology	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 Jan-Jun
Total Patients	no data	no data	4,681	5,522	5,869	5,607	5,516	5,959	6,338	6,715	3,196
Within 15 working days	no data	no data	74.0%	83.4%	85.3%	83.2%	77.1%	71.4%	64.6%	72.8%	79.4%

Table 1 Number completing Radical Treatment and percentage who commenced treatment within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat, nationally by year.

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:

Systemic Anti Cancer Therapy (SACT)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 Jan-Jun
Total Patients	6,831	6,995	7,219	7,241	8,252	7,683	8,147	8,506	9,063	9,289	4,610
Within 15 working days	90.9%	92.4%	90.0%	89.3%	89.8%	90.4%	87.0%	86.8%	86.6%	85.5%	83.9%

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 year.

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 that 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 day ward 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 2025 is for January to June and may not be complete for all submitting hospitals and is subject to change.
- Patients who are outside of target by reason of personal choice who opt to delay or defer treatment are considered as within target in the calculation of the KPI (%).

In relation to cancer screening, the National Screening Service (NSS) has advised the following in relation to its three cancer screening programmes:

- The number of people eligible for CervicalCheck is 1.3 million and invitations are up to date.
- BowelScreen is available to people aged 59 to 70. Invitations are up to date.
- There are over 625,000 women eligible for BreastCheck. Women are invited as they become eligible and screening is in their area. In line with our BreastCheck Charter, the majority of women are seen every two years. Currently, 37% of the target population are waiting over 2 years.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant National Director
National Cancer Control Programme