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Re.

**PQ 41424/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the average wait time for chemotherapy to commence from time of referral in each hospital group between 2015 and 2025, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Sheehan,

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 proportion of patients who received a new parenteral systemic therapy in the day ward setting that were treated within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat is tabulated as follows for each of the Health Regions:

Health Region	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
HSE Dublin and North East	92%	88%	86%	86%	91%	92%	95%	96%	93%	92%	90%
HSE Dublin and Midlands	97%	97%	94%	98%	98%	98%	98%	94%	89%	84%	89%
HSE Dublin and South East	89%	91%	88%	86%	83%	87%	63%	71%	80%	82%	77%
HSE South West	83%	90%	95%	89%	84%	90%	88%	82%	84%	93%	80%
HSE Mid West	84%	85%	89%	91%	90%	73%	89%	89%	89%	87%	85%
HSE West and North West	92%	97%	90%	87%	91%	89%	84%	86%	82%	72%	78%
Total	91%	92%	90%	89%	90%	90%	87%	87%	87%	85%	84%

Data is collected retrospectively and is recorded as the total number of patients who commenced treatment and the proportion that were within the 15 working day recommended target. No further detail is captured that would allow us to calculate the average time.

The SACT hospitals in each health region are:

HSE Dublin and North East = Beaumont, Connolly, Drogheda, Cavan, Mater.

HSE Dublin and Midlands = St. James's, Naas, Tallaght, Tullamore, St. Luke's Rathgar.

HSE Dublin and South East = St. Vincent's, St. Luke's Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford.

HSE South West = Cork, Kerry, Mercy, South Infirmary.

HSE Mid West = Limerick.

HSE West and North West = Galway, Letterkenny, Mayo, Portlincula, Sligo.

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.

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 (%).

Yours sincerely

Patricia Heckmann  
Assistant National Director  
National Cancer Control Programme