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Sinn Féin
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Re.

10564/25 - To ask the Minister for Health to provide the current wait times for a first chemotherapy appointment from the time of decision or consent to treat on a hospital-by-hospital basis, across the State, in tabular form.

Dear Deputy Mac Lochlainn,

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 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 2024, the 15 working day treatment key performance indicator (KPI) when summed across all 25 SACT units is tabulated as follows:

All Systemic Therapy Networks	Target	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
SACT KPI	90%	86.0%	84.6%	85.1%

More current data on those awaiting first treatment on an individual hospital by hospital basis would need to be sourced from each Hospital Group.

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).
- Data for 2024 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

