

07 July 2023

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Your Official Information Act request, reference: HNZ00019826

I would like to know how many people have been accepted into the bariatric Programme through Counties Manukau that are under the threshold of the 65 points criteria and are still waiting for a seminar?

I would like to know if the priority for the patients that have been waiting the longest on the list for their Counties Manukau referral to their first Bariatric seminar are being made a priority as well as those desperately needing the surgery.

I would like to know when the criteria for the Bariatric surgery within Counties Manukau was raised from 45 points to now 65 points and what happens to all those that were accepted into the programme before the criteria was raised.

I would also like to know why the Counties Manukau has not stopped referrals to work on backlog like other districts have?

I would like to know what the longest wait on the list has been from letter of acceptance to the first seminar for bariatric surgery.

I would like to know if it is within the Manukau Districts Health boards policy for ACCEPTED low priority patients to essentially not receive their treatment due to new criteria implemented after their acceptance constantly pushing them to the bottom of the list meaning they are unlikely to receive the treatment, and not notify the patients?

Te Whatu Ora – Counties Manukau District Response:

Bariatric surgery encompasses a number of techniques designed to re-direct gut hormones to reduce the pressure of appetite and restrict the amount of food that can be consumed. The most common procedures are sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass procedures.

It is important to note that bariatric surgery on its own does not result in sustained weight loss. The best results in bariatric surgery are achieved by our teams providing consistent, high-quality surgical procedures and pre-and post-surgical nutritional, social and emotional support to well-motivated, fully informed, committed patients.

It is also not the only solution for weight loss, particularly when the issue is musculoskeletal in nature. There are multidisciplinary teams who specialise in a combination of physio, nutritional support and psychological support which can produce the same result for the patient.

Because there's a limit on the number of publicly funded surgeries available, there's an assessment and selection system that general practice teams discuss with patients before making a referral. Since 2012, there has been a national prioritisation tool in place to help select patients who would be most benefited by bariatric surgery. Four major criteria - impact on life, likelihood of achieving maximum benefit with respect to control of diabetes, duration of benefit, and surgical risk - are used to establish the need and potential to

benefit for each patient for whom surgery is recommended as the best treatment option. Each of these criteria has multiple categories to enable an accurate representation for every patient.

In response to your more specific question:

I would like to know how many people have been accepted into the bariatric Programme through Counties Manukau that are under the thresh hold of the 65points criteria and are still waiting for a seminar?

There are currently 583 individuals that have been graded under 65.

I would like to know if the priority for the patients that have been waiting the longest on the list for their Counties Manukau referral to their first Bariatric seminar are being made a priority as well as those desperately needing the surgery.

Priority is being given to the longest waiting with the highest clinical need (graded 80-100) longest waiting of those patients, until all of 80-100 graded cohort have been treated. Then using the same parameters, extending to the 65-80 graded group.

I would like to know when the criteria for the Bariatric surgery within Counties Manukau was raised from 45 points to now 65 points and what happens to all those that were accepted into the programme before the criteria was raised.

The criteria was updated in April 2023. We're working on sending out letters to those that have been graded 45-65 once this is approved at regional level. Apologising for the delay to inform them of the new criteria and what support is available for them.

I would also like to know why the Counties Manukau has not stopped referrals to work on backlog like other districts have?

It's important that we continue receiving referrals to be able to prioritise those with greater need. We are now working on a consistent approach regarding these referrals and acceptance criteria.

I would like to know what the longest wait on the list has been from letter of acceptance to the first seminar for bariatric surgery.

The longest wait has been since January 2021.

I would like to know if it is within the Manukau Districts Health boards policy for ACCEPTED low priority patients to essential not receive their treatment due to new criteria implemented after their acceptance constantly pushing them to the bottom of the list meaning they are unlikely to receive the treatment, and not notify the patients?

The changes to acceptance criteria are in response to the large demand we have received for this service and how we can manage these volumes with the resource and capacity we have. The details of the patients graded 45-65 will be shared with Te Mana Ki Tua, a comprehensive programme to weight loss, to provide support to these patients

How to get in contact

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available on our website.

Naaku iti noa, naa



Dr Vanessa Thornton

Interim District Director - Counties Manukau

Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand