Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan
Report for period October to December 2009

Australian Capital Territory Report

On 20 December 2007, COAG announced that the Commonwealth will provide $150 million to the States and Territories in 2008 for an immediate national blitz on waiting lists. The aim of this Plan is that by the end of four years the backlog of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery will be dramatically reduced across Australia.

The Australian Government will provide up to $600 million over four years for the Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan. The four year Plan includes three stages:

1. $150 million to conduct an immediate national blitz, to help dramatically reduce the backlog of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery
2. $150 million to make systemic improvements to the hospital system and improve elective surgery throughput in the long term
3. Up to $300 million in dividend payments to States and Territories that dramatically increase the number of elective surgeries completed within the clinically recommended time by the end of the four year plan.

More information on the Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan can be viewed at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/elective.

Under Stage One of the Plan, the ACT Government received $2.5 million from the Australian Government to provide an additional 250 elective surgery procedures. These additional procedures will be delivered on top of the nearly $49 million this government has funded since 2003-04. Funding for Stage One is targeted at patients who have been waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery, also called “long waits”.

This project will focus on the ACT’s elective surgery waiting list currently maintained within the ACT public hospital system (i.e. Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital). The list includes both ACT and NSW residents. The ACT will provide treatment to a significant number of people who have been waiting longer than 365 days. At 31 December 2009, there were 645 people with waiting times of greater than 12 months, which is 8% fewer than the 702 people waiting longer than the same time last year and 35% below the 994 reported three years ago.

However at the same time, our public hospitals have been able to ensure that the majority of patients with the most urgent elective surgery needs (mainly cancer and major heart surgery) are treated.

Under the Commonwealth's Elective Surgery Reduction Plan, ACT Health has also constructed an additional three operating theatres at our public hospitals. While the building of the theatres has been funded by the Commonwealth, the ACT Government will fund the additional elective and emergency surgery activity that will be possible given the increase in operating room capacity.

ACT Elective Surgery Information

Table 1: Number of Patients Removed from Waiting List for Admission by Indicator Procedure (October to December 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients removed from the waiting list for admission, Quarter 2, 2009-2010				
Indicator Procedure		TCH	Calvary	Total ACT
1	Cataract extraction	np	181	182
2	Cholecystectomy	31	31	62
3	Coronary artery bypass graft	37	np	37
4	Cystoscopy	71	81	152
5	Haemorrhoidectomy	np	np	np
6	Hysterectomy	19	9	28
7	Inguinal herniorrhaphy	40	20	60
8	Myringoplasty	np	np	np
9	Myringotomy	16	25	41
10	Prostatectomy	12	np	16
11	Septoplasty	np	np	12
12	Tonsillectomy	40	19	59
13	Total hip replacement	18	25	43
14	Total knee replacement	17	41	58
15	Varicose vein strip and ligate	13	np	20
16	Not applicable (other)	1090	476	1566
Total		**1420**	**925**	**2345**

n.p. not published

Table 1 above shows the number of patients removed from the ACT waiting list for admission for surgery for the period October to December 2009. The quarter 2 result for 2009-10 is 2,345 patients admitted for surgery, down from 2,528 in the same quarter in 2008-09. ACT Public Hospitals provided 10,107 elective surgery operations in 2008-09, another record level of access to elective surgery in the ACT. This is 512 more people who have received elective surgery than the 9,595 recorded in 2007-08.

Table 2: Median Waiting Time for Indicator Procedures and Urgency Category (October to December 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients removed from the waiting list for admission, Quarter 2, 2009-2010			
Indicator Procedure	Median wating time (days)		
	TCH	Calvary	Total ACT
1 Cataract extraction	112	140	140
2 Cholecystectomy	39	74	60
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	18		18
4 Cystoscopy	67	84	78
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	136	39	88
6 Hysterectomy	69	104	73
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	86	87	87
8 Myringoplasty	342	738	372
9 Myringotomy	123	179	138
10 Prostatectomy	49	156	63
11 Septoplasty	152	616	201
12 Tonsillectomy	345	315	337
13 Total hip replacement	98	232	213
14 Total knee replacement	360	438	417
15 Varicose vein strip and ligate	190	184	190
16 Not applicable (other)	31	53	36
Total	**37**	**98**	**59**
By Urgency category			
Category 1: Admission within 30 days	12	14	13
Category 2: Admission within 90 days	88	106	97
Category 3: Admission at some time in the future	212	162	179
Total	**37**	**98**	**59**

Table 2 above shows that median waiting time statistics (50th percentile) from the waiting list for elective surgery, by indicator procedures for the period October to December 2009. Waiting times at admission for elective surgery by Categories 1, 2 and 3 at the 50th percentile is also reported in Table 2.

Additional information on elective surgery can be found in the ACT Health Public Services Performance report, a comprehensive quarterly report published on the ACT Health website at www.health.act.gov.au/reports

Table 3: Number of Patients Waiting by Urgency Category and by Surgical Speciality (October to December 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients ready for care still waiting and number of those overdue as at 31 December 2009						
Surgical specialty	Category 1		Category 2		Category 3	
	Waiting	Overdue	Waiting	Overdue	Waiting	Overdue
Cardiothoracic surgery	0	0	22	np	0	0
Ear, nose and throat surgery	np	0	150	301	393	168
General surgery	25	0	174	146	84	np
Gynaecology	np	0	96	71	132	11
Neurosurgery	np	0	36	49	0	0
Ophthalmology	np	0	25	24	565	np
Orthopaedic surgery	np	0	332	577	186	87
Plastic surgery	np	0	55	142	44	17
Urology	17	15	246	397	123	42
Vascular surgery	np	np	22	24	145	16
Other	13	0	127	99	127	15
Group Total	**78**	**16**	**1 285**	**1 830**	**1 799**	**374**

n.p. not published

The ACT Government also reports surgeon waiting times and operating sessions for ACT's public hospitals. This web page provides information on average waiting times for elective surgery for either a particular doctor or a clinical speciality. The web page shows the number of operating sessions a doctor has at either of the two public hospitals in the ACT. This information can be found in ACT Health's webpage at www.health.act.gov.au/waitinglists.

Note: The data in this Report is preliminary.