Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan
Report for period April to June 2010

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 30 June 2010, there were 830 people with waiting times of greater than 12 months, which is an increase on the 586 people waiting longer than the same time last year, however it is a 13% decrease on the 950 people reported in December 2007.

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.

To improve access to elective surgery, the Commonwealth and the ACT Government have entered into a partnership to significantly increase the number of elective surgery operations provided in our public hospitals each year and reduce the number of people waiting more than clinically recommended times for that surgery.

As part of this program, the Commonwealth and ACT Government have committed to add funds to the ACT Health budget to be spent specifically to increase access to surgery over the next four years.

ACT Elective Surgery Information

Table 1: Number of Patients Removed from Waiting List for Admission by Indicator Procedure (April to June 2010) – preliminary

Number of patients removed from waiting list for admission Quarter 4, 2009-2010			
Indicator procedure	**TCH**	**Calvary**	**Total ACT Public Hospital**
1 Cataract extraction	n.p.	312	312
2 Cholecystectomy	35	25	60
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	24	n.p.	24
4 Cystoscopy	80	146	226
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
6 Hysterectomy	22	28	50
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	33	26	59
8 Myringoplasty	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
9 Myringotomy	31	14	45
10 Prostatectomy	16	n.p.	19
11 Septoplasty	16	n.p.	20
12 Tonsillectomy	63	15	78
13 Total hip replacement	23	15	38
14 Total knee replacement	16	27	43
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	26	n.p.	32
16 Not applicable	1239	582	1821
Total	**1630**	**1205**	**2835**

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 April to June 2010. The quarter 4 result for 2009-10 is 2,835 patients admitted for surgery, up by 307 admissions from 2,528 in the same quarter in 2008-09. ACT Public Hospitals provided 9,769 elective surgery operations in 2009-10, the second highest on record. A total of 10,107 people on the ACT public hospitals' elective surgery waiting list had their surgery during 2008-09, the highest total on record.

Table 2: Median Waiting Time for Indicator Procedures and Urgency Category (April to June 2010) – preliminary

Median waiting time for the 15 indicator procedures and urgency category Quarter 4, 2009-2010			
	Median waiting time (days)		
Indicator procedure	The Canberra Hospital	Calvary Public Hospital	Total ACT Public Hospitals
1 Cataract extraction	.	175	175
2 Cholecystectomy	102	79	91
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	15	.	15
4 Cystoscopy	105	97	99
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	.	77	77
6 Hysterectomy	24	72	44
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	107	119	114
8 Myringoplasty	233	357	357
9 Myringotomy	69	246	93
10 Prostatectomy	109	24	84
11 Septoplasty	359	676	376
12 Tonsillectomy	354	301	341
13 Total hip replacement	159	301	286
14 Total knee replacement	366	342	366
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	384	254	377
16 Not applicable	35	70	43
Total	**46**	**113**	**78**

Table 2 above shows that median waiting time statistics (50th percentile) from the waiting list for elective surgery, by indicator procedures for the period January to June 2010. Waiting times at admission for elective surgery by Categories 1, 2 and 3 at the 50th percentile is also reported in Table 3.

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 (April to June 2010) – preliminary

Number of patients waiting by urgency category and by surgical speciality Quarter 4, 2009-10						
	Category 1		Category 2		Cateogry 3	
Surgical speciality	**waiting**	**overdue**	**waiting**	**overdue**	**waiting**	**overdue**
Cardiothoracic surgery	0	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	0	0
Ear, nose and throat surgery	0	n.p.	279	160	256	304
General surgery	0	33	159	210	n.p.	110
Gynaecology	n.p.	14	43	123	19	116
Neurosurgery	0	n.p.	25	26	0	0
Ophthalmology	0	n.p.	12	57	22	551
Orthopaedic surgery	0	9	658	343	82	235
Plastic surgery	0	11	77	68	20	41
Urology	n.p.	40	367	118	38	125
Vascular surgery	0	10	21	22	38	134
Other	n.p.	20	76	102	n.p.	117
Total	**8**	**152**	**1720**	**1233**	**490**	**1733**

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.