

Neasa Hourigan TD
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27th May 2024

Re.

21929/24 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of persons who started chemotherapy, by month, in each of the years 2020 to 2024, respectively.

21930/24 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide the number of persons attending chemotherapy within the recommended timeframe, by month, in each of the years 2020 to 2024, respectively.

21931/24 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide the proportion of persons attending chemotherapy within the recommended timeframe, by month, in each of the years 2020 to 2024, respectively.

21932/24 - To ask the Minister for Health the maximum time a person will wait to access their chemotherapy appointment; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

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 number of patients who received a new parenteral systemic therapy in the day ward setting, the number and proportion treated within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat is tabulated as follows:

Medical Oncology	Target	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Number of patients receiving new systemic parenteral treatment in the day ward setting</i>														
2020	*	7,683	742	632	597	571	623	601	652	625	667	654	719	600
2021	*	8,147	665	604	735	731	661	686	676	682	683	677	733	614
2022	*	8,506	679	711	726	657	748	728	665	731	677	748	794	642
2023	*	9,031	804	712	762	747	771	726	751	757	748	811	855	587
2024	*	2,005	756	694	555									
<i>Number who commenced treatment within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat</i>														
2020	*	6,890	617	562	538	518	573	554	599	550	603	588	636	552
2021	*	7,040	538	518	642	623	588	590	591	597	609	595	627	522
2022	*	7,285	572	624	645	556	646	623	584	649	573	620	659	534
2023	*	7,678	652	606	651	641	684	631	659	628	650	701	687	488
2024	*	1,700	582	607	511									
<i>KPI - new starts commencing treatment within 15 working days of being deemed ready to treat</i>														
2020	90%	90.4%	86.1%	89.7%	90.6%	91.6%	92.3%	92.5%	92.3%	89.0%	90.6%	90.2%	88.7%	92.0%
2021	90%	87.0%	82.3%	86.6%	87.6%	85.5%	89.0%	86.2%	87.7%	89.0%	89.9%	89.2%	86.1%	85.3%
2022	90%	86.8%	85.4%	88.0%	89.7%	85.7%	87.8%	87.2%	89.9%	90.0%	86.4%	83.4%	84.0%	83.5%
2023	90%	86.5%	82.8%	86.2%	86.6%	87.1%	90.3%	88.0%	88.9%	86.0%	88.8%	87.7%	82.0%	83.8%
2024	90%	85.8%	78.7%	88.0%	92.6%									

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).
- 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 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 (%).

21932/24 - 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 January to March 2024, the 15 working day treatment key performance indicator (KPI) was 86% with the remainder of patients treated within ~27 working days. Wait times longer than this would be related to medical reasons rather than capacity.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Heckmann

Patricia Heckmann
Assistant National Director
National Cancer Control Programme

