



Te Aho o Te Kahu release latest monitoring report of cancer services

Some cancer surgery and diagnostic procedures were impacted in May and June according to the latest COVID-19 monitoring report by Te Aho o Te Kahu, the Cancer Control Agency.

“Overall, the cancer system continues to operate well under pressure, which is thanks to the hard work of the cancer workforce,” acting chief executive of Te Aho o Te Kahu, Nicola Hill said.

“We have identified some areas within the cancer system where there has been disruption. Te Aho o Te Kahu is already working with the wider health system to ensure these are short-term issues.”

“Given the increased pressure on the health system due to winter illness and COVID-19, this was not unexpected.”

While there has been an increase in cancer registrations for both Māori and non-Māori, some cancer surgery numbers were lower than pre-pandemic levels.

To date, there were 8% fewer colorectal cancer surgeries and 5% fewer breast cancer surgeries performed in 2022 compared with 2018/19.

Lung cancer surgery volumes for Māori also decreased 25% compared to 2018/19 (16 fewer surgeries).

This decrease was of concern given the inequities already present for Māori in lung cancer incidence and mortality, Hill said.

“We will be doing further work to understand these decreases and support the sector to address this decrease.”

“The impacts identified are likely due to a range of factors including staff and patient sickness as a result of COVID-19 and winter illness.”

Radiation oncology and medical oncology first specialist assessments (FSAs) had increased in the reporting period compared to 2018/19.

The wider cancer workforce had been working hard during over the last few months to ensure people receive high quality care.

“I want to thank acknowledge the effort they have put in during winter to ensure those living with cancer and their whanau are looked after.”

“Te Aho o Te Kahu remains committed to ensure those living with cancer continue to have world-class treatment and care.”

The next monitoring report by Te Aho o Te Kahu will be released in November.