



## **Cancer treatment and diagnosis largely uninterrupted in March**

Cancer treatment and diagnosis remained at expected levels in March despite the ongoing Omicron outbreak, monitoring from Te Aho o Te Kahu, the Cancer Control Agency shows.

“It is very reassuring that cancer services have continued to function during the Omicron outbreak even under sometimes challenging circumstances,” chief executive of Te Aho o Te Kahu, Dr Diana Sarfati said.

“We know there have been pockets of disruption this year, which was expected, but overall, the cancer system continues to operate well.”

Data from March showed compared to pre-pandemic levels there was an increase in cancer registrations for Māori and non-Māori.

Gastrointestinal endoscopies had increased, while the number of bronchoscopies had slightly decreased.

There were also increases in medical oncology, radiation oncology and haematology first specialist assessments, with a decrease in radiation oncology treatment.

“We will continue to investigate any decreases. There may be a number of reasons behind these which are not related to COVID-19,” Sarfati said.

“I know for many living with cancer the current outbreak has caused unneeded stress and anxiety.”

“Cancer doctors and nurses have been working hard to ensure there is as little disruption as possible. I would like to thank them all for their efforts.”

It was still vital for any person living with cancer, or their family, to get vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19.

“With Omicron circulating in the community it is really important people get vaccinated and boosted. This is the best way to keep yourself and whānau protected against COVID-19.”

Te Aho o Te Kahu is continuing to monitor the impact the Omicron outbreak is having on cancer services. The next report analysing data from April will be released in June.

**ENDS**

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