

Making a **Difference**

2008/09 plans and actions for Well Wairarapa

Improving access to elective services

The Wairarapa DHB provides a range of elective services including general surgery, general medicine, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, urology, gynaecology, ENT and paediatrics. These services are provided by a mix of Wairarapa DHB consultants and visiting specialists.

Continually improve performance

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of elective services
- Maintain and improve the DHB's performance to achieve a 10% increase in elective procedures
- Reduce waiting times for elective surgery
- Improve Primary Care access to radiology
- Further develop specialised nurse roles in Outpatients, including ophthalmology and urology
- Continue to monitor and review how patients move through the system
- Strive to meet volume and financial targets and at the same time work towards efficiencies and productivity to ensure delivery of services
- Carry out regular audits of rates of DNAs (patients who did not turn up for appointments or procedures), trends, waiting times and responses of patients
- Improve liaison with GPs to continually improve the referral process, patient satisfaction, the process of giving priority to people with the greatest need.

Meet elective targets

- Ensure that patients are assessed and receive surgery within six months of assessment
- Consistently meet Ministry of Health requirements
- Continue to use the blitz approach to reduce waiting lists in ophthalmology; ear, nose and throat; urology



These plans and actions are part of national health targets 3,4
(see summary sheet)

FOR MORE INFORMATION



See the full version of the *District Annual Plan* at: wairarapa.dhb.org.nz

Blitzing the waiting list

Wairarapa DHB is seriously tackling its ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) waiting list, using extra visiting specialists to get on top of waiting lists for first appointments and for those booked for surgery. Common procedures include removal of tonsils and adenoids and the insertion of grommets.

Dr Nicola Hill, ENT specialist, is one of the surgeons who help the Wairarapa DHB blitz its ENT waiting lists for first specialist appointments and elective surgery. The blitzes are arranged at Wairarapa Hospital several times a year to hold extra clinics and perform surgery (usually a four day block) for those still waiting.

Vicki Hookham, mother of four year old Jackson, was absolutely delighted that her son had his tonsils out within six weeks of seeing the GP. "Jackson had troublesome tonsils which kept him awake at night for four months. His sleep patterns changed and he was waking four or five times a night coughing up phlegm. The GP referred him to a specialist who saw him a fortnight later and then he had surgery only two weeks after that. The whole process was so quick and fantastic. Dr Hill was brilliant, the staff were great and Jackson loved it. He had to stay the night in the Children's Ward and was out in 24 hours. He felt he was the centre of the universe during that time because he was so well looked after."

Waiting lists for specialist assessment and subsequent surgery can vary widely and can grow quickly if there is an absence of cover for any reason. Sometimes regular visiting specialists are on leave or away for education purposes which means that the hospital may get behind in the waiting lists. The blitz approach to help clear waiting lists has proved enormously successful and deals with the problem many small hospitals have in contracting permanent consultants.



Wairarapa Hospital also uses this approach in urology and ophthalmology. While there are visiting ophthalmologists who have regular clinics and perform surgery, it is always worthwhile scheduling extra clinics from time to time to ensure the list of people waiting does not grow too large, especially for cataract procedures.

The outpatient and surgical waiting lists are reviewed regularly to ensure the resources meet the demand. It's about being proactive and engaging extra consultants to ensure that no one needs wait too long and it means the hospital can meet elective surgery targets set by the Ministry of Health.