



NEW ZEALAND PRIVATE SURGICAL
HOSPITALS ASSOCIATION INC

MEDIA RELEASE

Private surgical hospitals propose plan to cut surgery waiting lists

Private sector hospitals are calling for a formal partnership with government to help meet the unmet demand for elective surgeries.

The President of the NZ Private Surgical Hospitals Association (NZPSHA) Richard Whitney says New Zealand has a growing and unmet demand for elective surgery, and overall waiting times are increasing.

He said the private hospitals sector has significant capacity, and the experience and expertise, to absorb much of this demand. NZPSHA member hospital facilities provide approximately 50 percent of all elective surgery performed in New Zealand.

“We can partner with government to provide a huge number of elective surgeries.

“Outsourcing this surgical workload would help to meet the large unmet demand while relieving the load on DHBs, enhancing efficiencies and reducing government capital expenditure requirements.

“It would also improve the quality of life for thousands of New Zealanders.”

Many DHBs have elective surgery capacity problems that create a range of issues for patients.

More than 350,000 New Zealanders 18 years and over have some form of elective surgery each year. An additional 280,000 have been told they need some form of elective surgery but only 110,000 of those are on waiting lists.

More than half of the 280,000 who require elective surgery but haven't had it say their quality of life is worse than it was five years ago. A quarter state their quality of life is a lot worse, driven by a lack of mobility and higher levels of pain.

Almost a third of those who require elective surgery have had to make significant lifestyle changes.

Overall waiting times for surgery have increased since 2013. Among those waiting for surgery, waiting times are up by 80 days to 304 days.

“The increasing challenge facing any government is funding the ever-growing needs of the health system. We are proposing a partial solution,” Mr Whitney said.

The NZPSHA is also urging government to reform the existing health insurance system to ensure premiums remain more affordable for New Zealanders as they age.

“The current health insurance system means premiums become too expensive, and ageing New Zealanders stop or reduce their insurance cover, instead relying more on State-funded care.

“That's unsustainable and there are practicable ways of addressing that issue.”

The NZPSHA outlined its views in its briefing to the incoming Minister, a copy of which is available at [Briefing Paper to the Incoming Minister](#)

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