

Cataract Wait Times

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The current process to access cataract surgical service features 20 independently managed waiting lists resulting in long and inconsistent wait times.

In 2005 the Wait Time Alliance established a 16 week benchmark wait time for cataract surgery for patients who are at high risk. There is not yet consensus on a definition of "high risk," so the benchmark is applied across all priority levels. Benchmarks express the amount of time that clinical evidence shows is appropriate to wait for the procedure. The benchmark wait time was calculated from the point at which the referral was booked for surgery to the point when the surgery was completed. The Canadian Institute for Health Information reported in 2010 that 70% of patients in Manitoba received cataract surgery within benchmark. Misericordia Health Centre, for the same time frame, reported that 56% to 74% of patients received cataract surgery within benchmark. Patients view the wait time from the point at which the referral is sent to the ophthalmologist's office to the point when the surgery was completed. As there are different understandings of reported wait times and how patients view the wait time, the project will review Wait time 1 and Wait time 2:

- Wait time 1 is measured from the time of receipt of a completed referral to the time of consult.
- Wait time 2 is measured from the time the patient makes the decision to proceed with surgery to the time the actual surgery occurs.

The goal of the Misericordia Cataract Wait Times Assessment project is to validate the current process, define wait times and provide recommendations for improvement. It is anticipated improvement recommendations will be implemented in a subsequent project beginning in the spring of 2012.