Surgical Activity During Christmas/New Year Policy

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Functional Sub group  Clinical/ Patient Services - Surgical
Clinical/ Patient Services - Anaesthetics

Summary  The Surgical Activity During Christmas/New Year Period policy describes the optimal and maximum time periods for reduced activity over this time. Local Health Districts and Networks are required to have plans that make provision for emergency and urgent surgery as well as ensuring that long wait patients do not exceed their clinical priority category timeframe during this period.

Replaces Doc. No.  Surgical Activity During Christmas/New Year Policy [PD2012_024]

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Applies to  Local Health Districts, Speciality Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Public Hospitals

Audience  Hospital General Managers, Directors of Nursing, Surgeons, Admissions, Bed Management, EDs

Distributed to  Public Health System, NSW Ambulance Service, Ministry of Health

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Policy Manual  Patient Matters

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Status  Active

Director-General

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is mandatory for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.
SURGICAL ACTIVITY DURING CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR POLICY

PURPOSE

Appropriate planning of surgical activity across the year is an essential component of maintaining a high quality surgical service, providing certainty for patients, families and carers. Planning also enables surgical, anaesthetic, theatre and ward staff to allocate resources, plan leave and determine appropriate rosters. This planning will recognise changes in demand on the hospital system across the seasons, holiday periods and key clinical conferences and other teaching and training events.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

During the Christmas/New Year period, many clinicians and patients wish to take a holiday break and it is appropriate to adjust surgical activity to reflect this drop in demand for booked surgery. Urgent and emergency surgery needs must be met throughout this holiday period. It is essential that all patients booked for surgery continue to receive their surgery within the clinical priority timeframes throughout December and January.

This Surgical Activity during Christmas/New Year Period policy reminds Local Health Districts and Health Networks of the need to consult with their surgical services and complete a service plan by end October each year for surgical services over the December/January period. The policy is endorsed by the Surgical Services Taskforce.

Due to the need to ensure minimal wait times and to maintain the volume of surgery required over the full year, a reduction in normal operating theatre availability and surgical service capacity should NOT exceed three weeks during the December/January period. For smaller facilities that perform a limited volume of surgery, a longer period is permissible subject to all patients being treated within the clinically recommended timeframe.

IMPLEMENTATION

• All Local Health Districts and Health Networks must complete a Christmas/New Year Activity Plan for surgical services by the end of October each year. This plan should be developed in close consultation with clinicians and hospital managers and be endorsed by the District/Network Program Director of Surgery.

• The plan must ensure urgent and emergency surgery requirements are able to be met, and ensure that elective patients do not exceed the recommended clinical priority timeframe during this period.

• If a period of reduced activity of more than 3 weeks is proposed, the proposal must be discussed with, and approved by, the Deputy Director-General System Purchasing and Performance, Ministry of Health.

• Local Health Districts and Health Networks must ensure that appropriate advice well in advance regarding reduced activity is communicated to relevant stakeholders such as surgeons, anaesthetists and other staff.
## REVISION HISTORY

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General System Purchasing &amp; Performance</td>
<td>Correct policy format. Rescinds PD2012_024</td>
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<td>(PD2012_038)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General System Purchasing &amp; Performance</td>
<td>Update to align with Local Health District &amp; Health Networks structure. Reduce maximum period of reduced activity. Replaced PD2006_015</td>
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<td>November 2006</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General Health Performance</td>
<td>New Policy</td>
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