



## **Surgeons Support Publication of Referral Data**

**Wednesday 27 April, 2016**

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) supports the publication of Phase 1 data from the Ministry of Health's National Patient Flow project.

Professor Randall Morton, Chair of the RACS New Zealand National Board, said that the collection and public reporting of referral data was an essential tool for ensuring that New Zealanders were receiving the elective services that they needed.

"Although there has been an increased investment in health from the New Zealand Government, there has also been a growing demand for elective services," Professor Morton said.

"With an increasing and aging population we expect that the need for elective services will continue to grow."

The first release of data from the National Patient Flow project provides a three month snapshot of referrals between July and September 2015, with subsequent data scheduled to be published every three months.

RACS recognises that this data collection and analysis is still under development and that revisions are likely as the quality of the collection improves.

"It is vital that accurate data is available to inform how New Zealand's health budget is spent. RACS firmly supports the initiative behind the collection of this data."

"While some patients are not being assessed either due to insufficient information, ineligibility, or the assessment no longer being required, there are also a significant number of patients who could benefit from specialist assessment that are missing out as they are below the threshold. This group in particular is concerning for RACS."

"We believe that unmet need will continue to be one of the largest challenges facing New Zealand's public health system."

### **About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

[www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)

**Media inquiries: Calum Barrett, RACS New Zealand +64 4 385 8247 or +64 27 279 7433**