

Dr. Peter Blair, Program Medical Director, Surgery

Fraser Health Authority

Dear Peter,

Recently, over your signature, FHA has sent out a decree that all bookings of patients that have waited longer than 40 weeks will be sent back to the surgeon's office for reassessment. The surgeon may have to call the patient back into the office to be seen and review the booking. We realize this is to try to prevent FHA from being fined for its failure to provide timely access to surgery. This is particularly onerous on the patient's part to make them return to the surgeon's office just to have the patient say yes, not to mention the added cost to the medical system that is already finding it stressful to cope. We accept the excuse that some of the patients on the wait list will have already died waiting, moved, or been operated on at another more efficient health authority but these are probably few. We cannot help but think that this is a carefully planned move to re-direct the surgeon's time away from seeing new patients and thereby decreasing the influx of new bookings for surgery.

It appears that you are unfairly putting the blame of the long wait list of Burnaby Hospital upon the surgeons but the fault is solely due to FHA. The wait times from the Provincial Wait List data clearly shows that FHA is failing to place adequate resources at Burnaby Hospital in preference to Surrey Memorial Hospital and other acute care sites. The data is as follows;

An example of this (in weeks for surgical wait):

	<u>Burnaby Hosp</u>	<u>Surrey Mem Hosp</u>
breast reduction	80.4 weeks	14.3
cholecystectomy	58.5	10.8
abdominal hernia	56.7	24.1
ACL knee	84.7	23.1
cataract	41.3	39.1
prostate	61.6	28.6

The staggering difference in the wait times is not surprising considering that the funding of the Burnaby Hospital Operating Room that FHA provides is only 1/2 of the amount that it provides to Surrey Memorial Hospital. Burnaby Hospital is given the resources to utilize only 6 of the 10 operating rooms at BH. We, the surgeons of BH, have repetitively documented the lack of resources that FHA provides to BH as compared to its other acute care sites. It is obvious that the only way that the surgeons of BH can reduce their waiting lists is by having access to more operating room time to do the surgery.

It is quite evident by the numbers that the people of East Vancouver and Burnaby wait too long for their surgery. FHA wants to manipulate the surgical waitlist to artificially decrease the numbers. We need a health authority to adequately fund surgery at Burnaby Hospital to fix the people not the numbers.

The surgeons of Burnaby Hospital have lost confidence with the management of FHA surgical services. We ask that FHA rescind this idea of reassessing patient's bookings that have waited 40 weeks or more and instead provide adequate resources to Burnaby Hospital to reduce surgical wait times. Recalling the bookings is a meaningless make work project for office staff and everyone concerned.

Sincerely,


Concerned Surgeons of Burnaby Hospital


Dr. Ross C. Horton


Dr. Timothy Kostamo

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