

York patients have shorter wait than provincial average

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

Wait times for medical procedures at York Region's hospitals are generally shorter than the provincial average, according to a new Health Ministry website.

The site provides patients and doctors with information on actual wait times for various procedures — cataract, joint replacement, cancer and cardiac surgeries, MRIs and CT scans.

Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket has the shortest queue in Ontario for breast cancer surgery, 15 days compared to the average Ontario wait of 25 days. At Markham

Stouffville Hospital, the average wait is 22 days. York Central Hospital was not required to report in this category.

Southlake, with one of Ontario's most comprehensive cardiac care programs, sees heart patients quicker than the provincial average. It sees angiography patients in half the average Ontario wait of 18 days. Angioplasty patients are treated, on average, two days faster than the nine-day Ontario average. The hospital also conducts bypass surgery four days quicker than the 30-day average.

The jury is still out on the effectiveness of the website.

"It's in the early stages and

more information is to come on why wait lists are the way they are," said York Central president and CEO Bruce Harber. "The information will allow us to look at the efficiency agenda. It's good evidence and I believe it demonstrates accountability to the public."

As the site evolves, data will become more meaningful.

Budgets, workloads, patient cancellations and how the public responds to doctors with long wait lists will have to be factored into wait list analysis, Mr. Harber said.

"It's a good start to determine how effective the extra funding has been."

WAIT TIMES

Here are waiting times for key procedures for York Region's three hospitals and the Ontario average as listed on the Ministry of Health website.

	York Central	Markham	Stouffville	Southlake	Ontario
Cataract surgery	97 days	109 days	132 days	139 days	
Hip replacement	101 days	138 days	166 days	164 days	
Knee replacement	163 days	403 days	189 days	202 days	

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