

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2009**

Question

“Can the Minister advise whether there is now a waiting list for certain cancer treatments, and, if so, inform members why this is the case and what measures, if any, she will put in place to eliminate any delays in treatment?”

Answer

An ageing population generates proportionately more new cancer diagnoses, whilst serial advances in drug-based cancer therapies have dramatically improved the prospects for recently diagnosed patients. The majority of cancer patients currently treated in the developed world now enjoy lengthening cancer survivorship, based upon treatment advances that permit 2nd - or even 3rd and 4th – opportunities for entering remission.

The combination of more new cancers, with multiple opportunities to successfully re-treat, has led to steady rises in numbers of treatment episodes per head of population across the world. Citizens of all modern nations now expect timely access to these treatment advances, and with them the chance of lengthening cancer survivorship.

In Jersey, patients who are diagnosed with cancer are managed by a number of consultant speciality teams within the general hospital i.e.

Respiratory
Gynaecology
Bowel
Breast
Urology
Haematology

Wherever possible the patient diagnosis and treatment is managed in Jersey, primarily with surgical intervention and / or chemotherapy. As clinically determined, UK centres are used and selected for their expertise in the particular cancer field.

Patients who require radiotherapy attend Southampton.

In answer to the specific question, all patients are seen urgently within a very short time frame and treatments are commenced within National Guidelines whether for surgery or chemotherapy.

The UK centres likewise accept Jersey patients within the clinically demanding NHS guidelines.

The only speciality where a delay in service has occurred is for Urology patients who are referred to Portsmouth. My officers are communicating with Portsmouth to improve this service.

The local Oncology service is however on the very limits of being able to cope with the increasing numbers of cancer patients. An expansion of the Oncology unit has been identified in the States Capital Program for 2011. Failure to expand the Oncology Unit in a timely fashion will indeed place the H&SS Department in an invidious and wholly untenable position of creating cancer treatment ‘waiting lists’, for new and/or returning cancer patients.