

Change to wait times displayed within the eReferrals tool

Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health have worked with the eReferrals vendor (OceanMD) to request changes to how wait time information is displayed. Please review the information below to understand what is changing and what this means for you.

What is changing?

For Nova Scotia providers and services listed in Ocean’s Healthmap directory, Ocean will no longer display their [Ocean calculated wait times](#). This addresses feedback that their calculation is not yet meaningful, as it reflects wait times for eReferred patients only, based on information documented within the tool to date.

Ocean is rolling out two new display options that improve wait time management and transparency:

1) Default option

All Nova Scotia listings will automatically display **‘Managed by Central Intake’** and **no wait time** information will be visible in the search results.

2) Site specific

Nova Scotia providers / services listed in the directory can override the default **‘Managed by Central Intake’** message by [UPDATING THEIR DIRECTORY LISTING](#). Users have the option to:

- **RECOMMENDED** - add a self-reported wait time (i.e., 12 months)
- select **‘Unknown’** from the drop-down menu; or
- select **‘Unspecified’** from the drop-down menu.

NOTE: If these options are chosen, they will need to be updated every six months to avoid reverting to the default, **‘Managed by Central Intake’**.

Wait times and eReferrals

One of the expected long-term benefits of eReferrals will be the ability to see:

- how many referrals are flowing into the system,
- where they are being directed and
- how quickly patients are receiving appointments for surgical consults or diagnostic imaging services.

Currently, not all providers who refer to surgeons or Diagnostic Imaging are in-scope to use the eReferrals tool, meaning many referrals are still being received via traditional channels.

Once most referrals are sent and processed by receiving sites in the tool (i.e., receivers adding appointments or anticipated wait times, completing referrals etc.), the system will gain a better understanding of the true demands and wait times for services, to support planning and access.

What does managed by Central Intake mean?

This means that Central Intake teams are currently working to understand as much as possible about available referral options and wait times to help them route referrals appropriately.

What information do Surgical Central Intake teams gather and consider when routing referrals?

Teams consider any patient preferences expressed, the benefits of care close to home (i.e., consults, surgery, pre- and post-operative care) and information from various sources, such as:

- Retrospective wait time information on the NS wait times website.
- The volume of referrals sent to various providers in the eReferrals tool.
- Services listed within surgeons' health services listings.
- Information supplied by surgeons about:
 - the size of their existing waitlists
 - their self-reported wait time for consults

What information do Diagnostic Imaging teams gather and consider when routing referrals?

Teams route requisitions to a patient's preferred location to be triaged. Once a priority level has been assigned the requisition may be sent to a different site to minimize the patient's wait time. This helps provide equitable access to patients.