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Increased activity and stable wait times in NSW public hospitals

The latest report by the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) shows NSW public hospitals have maintained performance on waiting times and increased the volume of services provided during October to December 2016.

The *Hospital Quarterly* report provides the most up-to-date snapshot of hospital admissions, and timeliness of elective surgery and emergency department care in NSW.

BHI Chief Executive Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque said emergency department waiting times were stable overall in the quarter, despite an increase of almost 20,000 patients over the same quarter the previous year.

“With 684,740 patients visiting an emergency department in the quarter, presentations are at the highest level of the past five years, so it is encouraging that performance has remained stable in NSW,” Dr Levesque said.

The report shows that, compared to the same quarter the previous year, in NSW emergency departments:

- 92.0% of patients who arrived by ambulance had their care transferred to hospital staff within 30 minutes, an increase of 1.5 percentage points
- 74.3% of patients were able to leave within four hours, an increase of 0.2 percentage points.

“This quarter, 92 percent of patients had their care transferred from ambulance to hospital staff within 30 minutes, and this is the highest result ever reported by the Bureau of Health Information,” Dr Levesque said.

The report shows that, overall, 75.6% of patients’ treatment started within clinically-recommended timeframes in NSW emergency departments, an increase of 0.7 percentage points. However, among more urgent categories, fewer patients had their treatment start on time:

- 66.4% of triage category 2 (emergency) patients had their treatment start within the recommended 10-minute timeframe
- 70.3% of triage category 3 (urgent) patients within the recommended 30 minutes
- 78.8% of triage category 4 (semi-urgent) patients within the recommended one hour
- 93.1% of triage category 5 (non-urgent) patients within the recommended two hours.

In NSW, 54,812 elective surgical procedures were performed this quarter, almost 1,500 more than the same quarter the previous year.

“Overall, 97.6% of patients who received elective surgery this quarter did so on time, which is the highest result reported in an October to December quarter for the past five years,” Dr Levesque said.

“This quarter the biggest improvement was seen in non-urgent surgery with 96.3 percent performed on time, a 1.5 percentage point increase from the same quarter the previous year.”

The report and data are available at bhi.nsw.gov.au

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