

MEDIA RELEASE

Patients' perspectives on NSW public hospitals

The Bureau of Health Information's first report focuses on a key recommendation of the Garling inquiry into NSW public hospitals – providing doctors and nurses with information about what matters to patients so care can improve.

The report, *Insights into Care: Patients' Perspectives on NSW Public Hospitals*, looks closely at the care experiences of the patients who spend either a day, or one or more nights, in a public hospital each year.

In 2009 most patients who spent one or more nights in hospital (overnight patients) and completed the survey rated care as excellent (34%), very good (34%) or good (22%). A minority reported it to be fair (8%) or poor (3%).

Patients who spent a day receiving a test, surgery or other procedure (day only patients) rated care as excellent (42%), very good (36%) or good (17%), while a minority reported it to be fair (4%) or poor (1%).

Bureau of Health Information Chief Executive, Dr Diane Watson said: "Our in-depth analysis includes feedback from over 20,000 patients, treated in NSW public hospitals in 2009. This survey program is the largest of its kind in Australia and includes over 80 questions covering a range of experiences including wait times, use of medication, and admission and discharge procedures.

"What matters most to patients is teamwork – how well doctors and nurses work together. Staff teamwork was the factor most likely to influence whether patients viewed their care as excellent or poor. Key care experiences that also matter to patients include courtesy of nurses and admitting staff, being treated with dignity and respect, cleanliness, how well the hospital was organised, and availability of nurses.

"To the people of NSW, excellence in healthcare is more than professional competency and appropriate use of technology - it is about doctors and nurses working together to create a caring culture.

"The report provides comparative information across major public hospitals about the key care experiences that matter to patients and this gives insights into where health professionals and the system can make improvements," Dr Watson said.

At the conclusion of his inquiry, Commissioner Peter Garling recommended the establishment of the Bureau of Health Information as an independent, board-governed organisation that would report on issues of quality and safety for patients in NSW public hospitals.

Insights into Care is the Bureau's first report with others to follow quarterly focusing on hospital performance, including emergency and surgical care, and an annual report on the performance of the NSW public health system. The report and its related documents are available at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

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