

MEDIA BACKGROUND

Hospital Quarterly: Performance of NSW public hospitals January - March 2014

Hospital Quarterly is the quarterly report on performance of the NSW public hospital system, it is published in three modules on Admitted Patients, Emergency Departments and Elective Surgery and provides results for NSW and profiles for 77 hospitals and each local health district in NSW.

Admitted Patients, January to March 2014

There were 435,633 admitted patient episodes in January - March 2014. This is 13,750 more than the same quarter a year ago, 96% (419,335) of these were acute.

There were 223,272 acute overnight patient episodes and 182,666 acute same day episodes. 74% of same day episodes are planned and 26% of overnight episodes are planned.

The average length of stay in a hospital for all acute episodes was 3.1 days, and for overnight episodes was 4.9 days.

The average length of stay for an acute patient episode of care has decreased slightly over the past five years, but is unchanged compared to one year ago.

Emergency Departments, January to March 2014

More than half a million patients (614,438) attended NSW emergency departments (EDs) from January to March 2014. This is 2% more than the same quarter a year ago.

The number of patients admitted to hospital from the ED has increased by 4% to 164,851.

Measures relating to ambulance arrivals at the ED

- 88% of patients arriving at NSW EDs had a transfer of care time within 30 minutes.
- The median transfer of care time was 12 minutes during the January - March 2014 period this has remained over the 12 months.
- The median off stretcher time during the January - March Quarter 2014 was 26 minutes, this has remained fairly stable over the last five quarters.

Time to start treatment

At a state level, the Bureau reports the time it takes for patients to begin treatment following arrival at the ED across four triage categories. The results are provided below and compared to the same quarter for the previous year.

- The Bureau does not report time to treatment for triage 1 patients (e.g. critical injury, cardiac arrest) as this category is extremely time sensitive, representing a two minute window to begin treatment.

All Bureau reports are available at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

- Triage 2 – emergency (e.g. chest pain, severe burns)
The median time to start treatment was 8 minutes (unchanged) and 95% of people started treatment between 0 and 31 minutes (3 minutes shorter than the same quarter the previous year).
- Triage 3 – urgent (e.g. moderate blood loss, dehydration)
The median time to start treatment was 20 minutes (1 minute shorter) and 95% of people started treatment between 0 and 94 minutes (15 minutes shorter than the same quarter the previous year).
- Triage 4 – semi-urgent (e.g. sprained ankle, earache)
The median time to start treatment was 26 minutes (2 minutes shorter) and 95% of people started treatment between 0 and 138 minutes (18 minutes shorter than the same quarter the previous year).
- Triage 5 – non-urgent (e.g. small cuts, abrasions)
The median time to start treatment was 23 minutes (3 minutes shorter) and 95% of people started treatment between 0 and 133 minutes (17 minutes shorter than the same quarter the previous year).

Compared to the same quarter in 2013, the time that it took for half of patients to start treatment was the same or shorter across all triage categories. The patients waiting the longest (95th percentile) are being seen more quickly in all triage categories.

Leaving the emergency department

- The median time to leaving the ED for all patients was 2 hours and 45 minutes after arrival. This is 13 minutes shorter than the same quarter in 2013.
- The 95th percentile time to leaving the ED was 9 hours and 29 minutes after arrival. This is an improvement on 10hrs 40mins from the same quarter in 2013.
- 27% of patients received treatment in the ED and were subsequently admitted to a ward, a critical care unit or via an operating suite in the hospital. On average, these patients spent longer in the ED

Leaving the ED within four hours

- During the January – March 2014 quarter, 73% of patients left NSW EDs within four hours.
- This is the highest percentage of patients leaving the ED within hour hours for over the last 5 years.

Elective Surgery, January- March 2014

- During the January-March 2014 quarter, 49,486 elective surgical procedures were completed in NSW public hospitals or in facilities contracted by NSW public hospitals. This is 3% more surgical procedures than completed in the same quarter in 2013 (48,009).
- 97% of all elective surgery patients were admitted within the recommended time for the urgency of their care, an improvement of 2 percentage points compared to the same quarter the previous year.

Surgeries performed on time

Recommended times for surgery are 30 days for urgent surgery, three months for semi-urgent surgery and 365 days for non-urgent surgery.

During the January - March 2014 quarter NSW achieved:

- 100% on time for urgent surgeries, an increase of 1 percentage points compared to the same quarter last year.
- 97% on time for semi-urgent surgeries, an increase of 3 percentage points compared to the same quarter last year.
- 96% on time for non-urgent surgeries, an increase of 2 percentage points compared to the same quarter last year.

Median waiting times unchanged or decreasing

- The median waiting time for urgent surgery was 10 days, largely unchanged from the same quarter last year
- The median waiting time for semi-urgent surgery was 47days, unchanged from the same quarter in 2013
- The median waiting time for non-urgent surgery was 220 days, 10 days less than the same quarter in 2013.

90th percentile improving

- The 90th percentile waiting time for urgent surgery was 25 days, no different from the same quarter last year and three days less than the same quarter in 2012.
- The 90th percentile waiting time for semi-urgent surgery was 84 days, two days less than the same quarter in 2013 (86 days) and nine days less than the same quarter in 2012 (93 days)
- The 90th percentile waiting time for non-urgent surgery was 357 days, four days less than the same quarter in 2013 and eight days less than 2012 (365 days)

Longest median times by specialty

- Ophthalmology (190 days)
- Ear, nose and throat (153 days)
- Orthopaedic (125 days)

The procedures with the shortest median waiting times:

- Other - General Surgery (23 days)
- Cystoscopy (30 days)
- Coronary artery bypass graft (32 days)
- There was no change in the number of people on the waiting list for urgent surgery, a 6% increase in the number of people waiting for semi-urgent surgery and 4% increase for those patients waiting for non-urgent surgery compared to the same time in the previous year.
- At the end of the quarter there were 426 patients who were waiting more than 12 months for surgery compared to 755 patients the same quarter last year.