

Year in review 2012/13

Our role

The Bureau of Health Information (the Bureau) provides independent and impartial reports to government, the community and healthcare professionals on the performance of the NSW public health system. During 2012/13 our reports focused on performance and quality, effectiveness, efficiency, cost and responsiveness of the system to the health needs of the people of NSW.

The Bureau is a NSW board governed organisation led by Board Chair, Professor Bruce Armstrong AM and Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque MD PhD.

The Bureau's *Financial and Corporate Report 2012/13* is available at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

In our Strategic Plan for 2009 to 2014, the Bureau made a commitment to:

-  inform the NSW community about the performance of its public health system
-  inform efforts to improve patient care and strengthen healthcare policy in NSW
-  identify factors that support high performance public health systems
-  advise on strategies to improve health service performance reporting
-  maintain ethical, effective, responsible and reasonable business practices.

The Bureau seeks to achieve excellence in the provision of independent and impartial information for the people of NSW about their public health system.

We work to inform and promote accountability in a way that supports improvement to patient care.

From our Chairperson

Professor Bruce Armstrong



During the year the Bureau published five healthcare performance reports, including four issues of *Hospital Quarterly* and the *Annual Performance Review*, and assumed responsibility for the NSW Patient Survey Program. In doing so, the Bureau continued to achieve its goals and strengthened its position as the leading source of public reporting on the performance of the NSW health system.

2012/13 saw another period of expansion in responsibility for the Bureau and growth in staff numbers. The year was also a period of change at the Bureau, in April we welcomed Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque to the position of Chief Executive. He rapidly took hold of the reins of office and has planned some important new reporting directions for 2013/14.

Dr Levesque brings a wealth of experience and international insights to the Bureau, having previously held the positions of Scientific Director, Analyses and Evaluation of Health Systems at the National Institute of Public Health and

inaugural Deputy Commissioner, Performance Appraisal and Analysis at the Health and Welfare Commission in Quebec, Canada. In 2011/12, he was a Visiting Academic at the University of Melbourne and we are delighted to have him join the Bureau.

The Board wishes to thank Ms Kim Browne for her excellent work as Acting Chief Executive during 2012/13. Her contribution during this time was very highly regarded. Kim's skills, knowledge and leadership will not be lost to the Bureau as she continues in the role of Deputy Chief Executive.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of fellow Board members throughout the year. Their sound advice and good governance has been very important to the year's success.

From our Chief Executive

Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque



The Bureau was established to provide an independent and impartial account of the public healthcare delivery system in NSW and report publicly on its achievements.

Established as one of the pillars of the NSW health system, the Bureau has grown over the last year, integrating into its core activities the management of the NSW Patient Survey Program. It has been a pleasure for me to join the Bureau in the capacity of Chief Executive and to be able to work with the team to build on our existing measures and develop new ones to better reflect on the performance of the public health system in NSW.

Public reporting on the performance of healthcare systems involves keeping up-to-date with performance measurement and reporting efforts around the world; and adapting them to a NSW context. This ensures that the measures used to

report on NSW hospitals and the system as a whole are the best available. Our responsibility – to report publicly on the performance of the NSW healthcare system – is a vitally important one. We strive to meet that responsibility through the provision of balanced, trustworthy and transparent assessments of achievements and areas of concern in healthcare in NSW.

This year the Bureau has worked to develop new measures to assess the performance of the healthcare system.

These new measures will in future provide the basis to go beyond measures of access and utilisation with increased capacity to guide quality improvement and inform the community, healthcare system and government.

Healthcare in Focus

Healthcare in Focus, the Bureau's flagship publication, takes a wide-ranging look at the NSW healthcare system – looking out to see how the state performs in comparison with Australia and internationally, and looking in to examine the extent of variation across NSW public hospitals.


The Bureau's third annual performance report *Healthcare in Focus 2012: How well does NSW perform?* compared the NSW health system with the rest of Australia and 10 other countries.

For the first time, the report also looked at performance within NSW to see if the healthcare system is delivering consistently across the state. While NSW compared well internationally, the report showed variation in the performance of hospitals within the state.

The report identified opportunities for further improvements in the performance of NSW hospitals including reducing diabetic complications, the high rate of hospitalisation for complications from medical and surgical care and rates of unplanned readmission of patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Healthcare in Focus examined the following areas:

- 1 Effectiveness and appropriateness**
Gauging whether services are appropriate and based on professional standards and evidence
- 2 Access and timeliness**
Getting services when and where needed
- 3 Safety**
Essential for quality and high performance
- 4 Person centredness, responsiveness, respect and reliability**
Putting patients, carers and the community at the heart of healthcare
- 5 Equity**
Regardless of circumstances
- 6 Resources and utilisation**
Powering the healthcare system



The Bureau continued its collaboration with the US-based Commonwealth Fund to boost NSW-level sampling and participation in the International Health Policy Survey. This means that our state's patient voices can be heard alongside those from 10 other countries.

NSW is the only state in Australia to have a representative sample. The data and subsequent analyses provide a unique opportunity to place NSW performance in an international context and learn from healthcare systems around the world.

Healthcare in Focus provides a multifaceted and comprehensive view of quality and performance of the NSW healthcare system.

International data were drawn from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Commonwealth Fund. State-level data were drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, the Stroke Foundation, Cancer Institute NSW, the NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection, the NSW Emergency Department Data Collection, the NSW Health Patient Survey Program and the NSW Ministry of Health.

Hospital Quarterly

Hospital Quarterly provides information about admitted patients, elective surgery and emergency department performance in NSW public hospitals. It also provides individual performance profiles for more than 80 NSW public hospitals.

The Bureau published four *Hospital Quarterly* reports in the 2012/13 period. *Hospital Quarterly* generates significant media coverage in both metropolitan and rural media on the day of release. This coverage supports our role to provide regular information to the community, government and healthcare professionals on the performance of the NSW public health system.

In past issues of *Hospital Quarterly*, the Bureau has used a measure called 'off-stretcher time' to measure and report on the time taken for a patient to be transferred from ambulance paramedics to the emergency department staff.

In 2013 the Bureau secured access to new data and, following in-depth analysis, has assessed a new measure called 'transfer of care time'. This measure provides additional ways of reporting the experience of people who arrive at hospital by ambulance.

In subsequent issues of *Hospital Quarterly* we will report on both 'off stretcher time' and 'transfer of care time', providing a more comprehensive picture of the patient journey.

The timely transfer of ambulance patients into hospital emergency departments is important both from a patient and a healthcare system perspective.



NSW Patient Survey Program

The Bureau's mandate is to inform the community about the performance of its public health system and inform efforts to improve patient care and strengthen healthcare policy.

The Bureau, working with Ipsos Social Research Institute, manages the NSW Patient Survey Program on behalf of the NSW Ministry of Health and Local Health Districts.

Management of the survey program was transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Bureau in 2012. Since then the program has been reviewed and redeveloped with the aim of making surveys easier for patients to complete and more useful for hospital staff working to improve healthcare services.

Commencing with the Adult Admitted Patient Survey, the review process included consulting patients about their experiences, analysing past information, reviewing nationally and internationally relevant literature, and talking to clinicians and hospital managers to better understand their needs.

The Bureau began mailing out the Adult Admitted Patient Survey in June 2013. Data from the survey will become available in 2014.

Taking over management of the NSW Patient Survey Program represents a significant change for the Bureau, building on our previous work analysing, interpreting and reporting survey data. The Bureau will play a central role in the full cycle of the program, contributing to its scientific coherence, relevance and rigour.

In 2012/13 the Bureau increased its capacity to deliver information for and about patients with the NSW Patient Survey Program.

Common Questions

The Bureau is the NSW representative on the national Patient Experience Information Development Working Group (PEIDWG). This is a time-limited, expert group convened by the National Health Information and Statistical Standards Committee (NHISSC). PEIDWG oversaw the development of a set of Core Common Questions (CCQs) for use in patient experience surveys across Australia, and recommended the question set and specification to NHISSC.

The Bureau is piloting the use of CCQs in the Adult Admitted Patient Survey, and will analyse and report on the data, providing leadership and knowledge to other states.

Surveys



Adults admitted to hospital



People attending emergency departments



Children and young people admitted to hospital



People attending outpatient clinics



30-day mortality

The 2012 issue of *Healthcare in Focus* contained de-identified hospital-level data on the extent of variation in 30-day mortality rates following hospitalisation for heart attack (AMI or acute myocardial infarction) and for stroke (ischaemic stroke and haemorrhagic stroke). Variation across the state's hospitals ranged from two-fold for haemorrhagic stroke to five-fold for heart attack.

At the time *Healthcare in Focus* was published, the Bureau committed to undertake extensive consultation and methodological development work with a view to publicly reporting hospital-level mortality data in 2013. This was achieved and included collaboration with clinical networks to examine valid comparisons that have informed the Bureau's work in determining the measures.

Work focused on the original clinical conditions, heart attack and stroke, and two additional conditions, hip fracture surgery and pneumonia.

Methodological development in this area of work focused on:

- 1 Refinement of inclusion and exclusion criteria
- 2 An assessment of alternative risk adjustment methods (in particular, different approaches to controlling for comorbidities that influence the likelihood of mortality)
- 3 Evaluation of different modelling approaches to compare and interpret hospital outcomes
- 4 Assessment of different attribution approaches (e.g. considering whether patients transferred between hospitals should be attributed to the first or to the last hospital in their hospital stay)
- 5 Development of value-added analyses (e.g. patient profiling and survival analysis) that will inform clinicians and improvement efforts

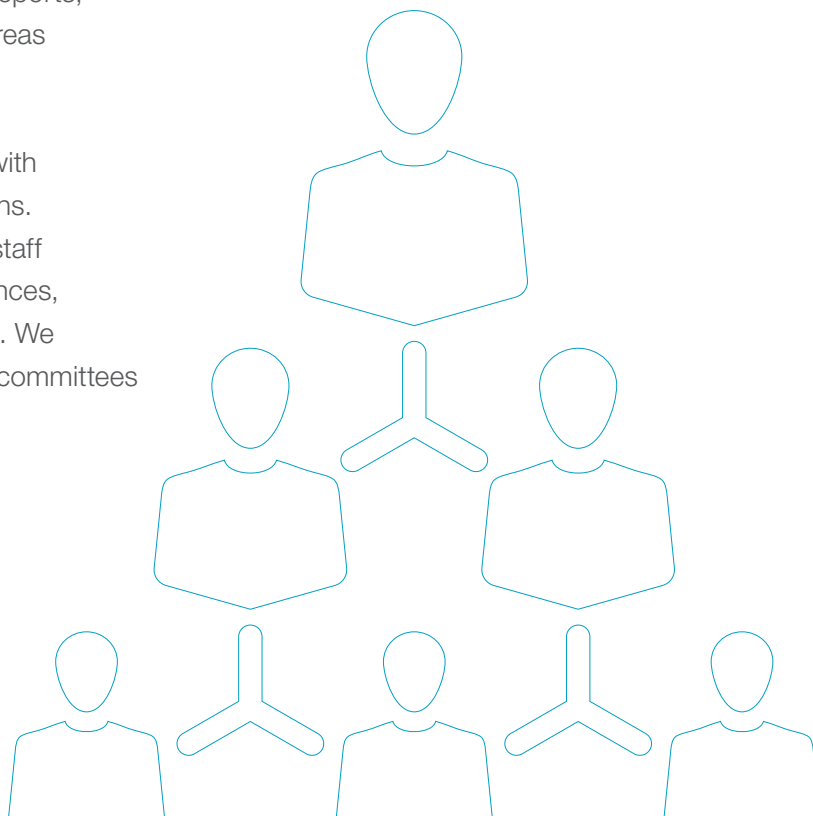


Our stakeholders

The Bureau is an independent organisation that works in a transparent, open and collaborative way. Essential to our success is our ability to connect with experts across all areas of health. These relationships with stakeholders contribute to all areas of our work, including our reports, data, development of measures and areas of interest.

Some highlights for the year were visits to NSW Local Health Districts of the Hunter New England, Mid–North Coast, Murrumbidgee, Sydney Children’s Hospital Network and Western Sydney.

The Bureau actively seeks to engage with a variety of organisations and institutions. Our Chief Executive and other expert staff regularly give presentations at conferences, workshops, meetings and roundtables. We participate in discussions, panels and committees and attend expos and conferences.



In 2013, there was a renewed focus on effective ongoing stakeholder engagement. Planning commenced on the development of a Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Framework to:

1

raise awareness of the Bureau's work at a state, national and international level

2

promote the use of the Bureau's products and tools to inform decision making by healthcare managers, improve patient care and strengthen healthcare policy in NSW

3

build upon our effective collaborations and partnerships with health agencies, health professionals and the wider research sector

Partnerships and collaborations

Partnerships with expert organisations allow the Bureau to strengthen and enhance the quality of our reports, and in turn provide useful analysis and data to support the work of key health organisations.

The Bureau has been involved in the Assessing Preventable Hospitalisation InDicators (APHID) study, funded by a National Health and Medical Research Council Partnership Project Grant. The study is a partnership involving the University of Western Sydney, the Medical Research Council Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (Glasgow), the University of Sydney, the Australian National

University, the University of Aberdeen, the Sax Institute, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation.

We also engage with other organisations for data and advice. These include the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission, NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Health Performance Authority, The Commonwealth Fund, the NSW Ministry of Health and the Stroke Foundation.



External review process

To ensure that our products are informative to the community, address needs for information among healthcare professionals, and offer a fair representation of health system performance, the Bureau consults project-specific advisory committees.

Feedback from advisory committee members, peer reviewers and data custodians is used to improve the relevance, accuracy, comparability and interpretability of our reports.

The Bureau would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, Clinical Excellence Commission, Cancer Institute NSW, the Ministry of Health and Local Health Districts (LHDs) in NSW.

In 2013 the Bureau began development work for a new report series titled *Patient Perspectives*. The series, to be released late 2013, will be the main vehicle for disseminating findings from the NSW Patient Survey Program. The first report in this series will be made possible with advice from peers at InforMH, Local Health Districts, Ministry of Health Aboriginal Health section, NSW Consumer Advisory Group and Mental Health Commission.

The Bureau ensures that all information is made publicly available. All reports and supporting material is available on the Bureau's website. The Bureau produces media releases and materials and actively seeks media coverage in print, radio and TV to inform the community about the Bureau's findings.

Patients and clinicians consultations

During 2012/13, stakeholder engagement activities focused on the NSW Patient Survey Program. In reviewing the survey program the Bureau consulted patients, clinicians and hospital managers to better understand their needs.

In March 2013, the Bureau held a workshop, attended by 70 healthcare professionals, clinicians, healthcare managers, consumers and health research institutes. This was followed in May 2013 with a further workshop held specifically for consumers. The purpose of the workshops was to understand the information needs and priorities of our stakeholders and to develop a relevant reporting tool for the healthcare system and general public.

The Bureau has worked to redevelop the survey program with input from a Patient Survey Strategic Advisory Committee. Consisting of representatives from the Bureau, Ministry of Health, NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, Clinical Excellence Commission, Local Health Districts and consumers, the committee provides considered

and expert advice on the strategic direction and performance monitoring of the survey program.

Working to support the survey program is an Implementation Advisory Committee. Representing all Local Health Districts, the committee works with the Bureau to ensure stakeholders are involved and informed of the survey program's progress.

Managing the NSW Patient Survey Program has led to new partnerships for the Bureau. In 2013 we began a project with NSW Cancer Institute with the view to developing a cancer patient emergency department survey.



Our people

The Bureau recognises that its staff are fundamental to achieving its vision to provide the community with an accurate understanding of the performance of the NSW public health system and make optimal use of information to improve the health and well being of people in NSW.

The Bureau ensures effective management of resources and introduces new technologies that enhance business practices.

Professional development and collaboration is encouraged, with the objective of strengthening our research, reports and products.

The number of staff at the Bureau has grown considerably during the year, from 17 to 23 people. The six new positions reflect the expansion of our work agenda, including the management of the NSW Patient Survey Program.



“We recruit highly skilled people and support them to develop and build on these skills.

Together we are working to foster a culture of teamwork, innovation and excellence.”

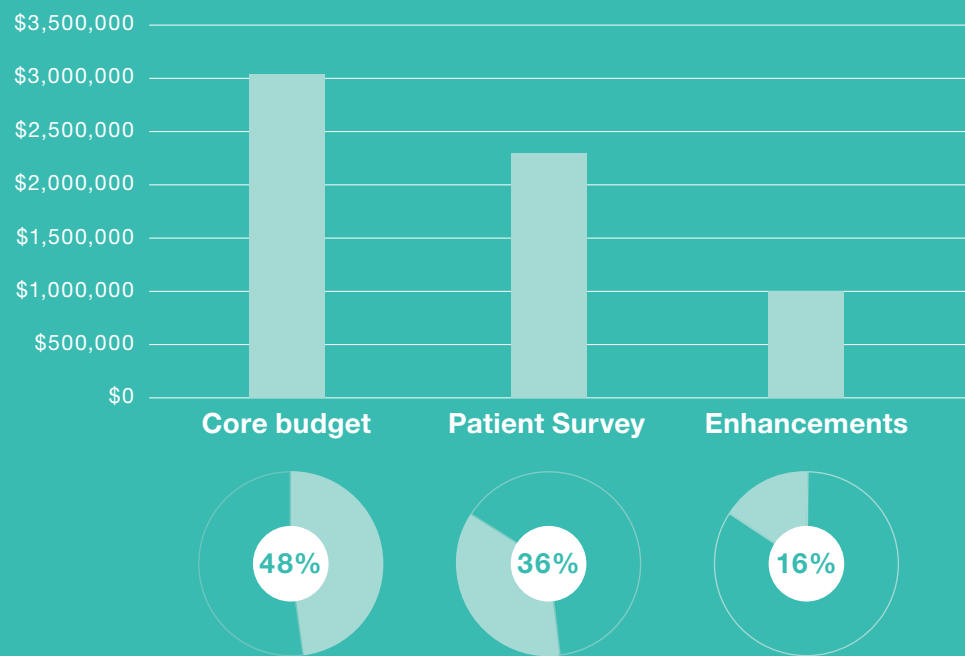
Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque

Financial summary

The Bureau's total expenses for the 2012/13 year were \$1.301M favourable to the Bureau's annual budget plan for expenditure. Our expenditure was less than planned as the management of the NSW Patient Survey Program was transferred to the Bureau and there was a period of new survey tool development and intellectual property issues. These factors resulted in a delay to the program, with the mail-out of surveys commencing in June.

Further details can be found in our *Financial and Corporate Report 2012/13* at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

Budget Allocation



The NSW Ministry of Health recurrent allocations for 2012/13		(\$'000)
Initial Allocation, 1 July 2012		3,042
Award Increases		59
NSW Patient Survey Program		2,298
Subsidy allocation not received		(1,578)
Balance as per Statement of Comprehensive Income		3,821

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