

Snapshot



Outpatient Cancer Clinics

Results from the 2020 patient survey





We heard from almost **9,000 people** about their experiences of care at NSW **outpatient cancer clinics** in 2020



Outpatient cancer clinics provide important care to patients, from initial diagnosis through to treatment and follow-up care. Treatments provided at these clinics include chemotherapy, radiation therapy and surgery. Outpatient cancer clinics also provide treatment for reasons other than cancer and around one in five patients who responded to this survey (21%) received care for other reasons, such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. The 2020 results also included feedback from patients who had a phone or video appointment.

Listening to what patients have to say about different aspects of their outpatient care is crucial to focus efforts on where improvements can be made.

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) partnered with the Cancer Institute NSW (CINSW) to deliver the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2020. Survey results reflect the experiences of 8,801 patients who responded to the questionnaire following attendance to one of 43 NSW facilities in November 2020, including three private facilities (Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, Riverina Cancer Care Centre and Sydney Adventist Hospital). Results for the 38 facilities where enough responses were received to report at a facility level are available in supplementary data tables and on the Bureau of Health Information Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

This Snapshot report highlights key findings in relation to the experiences of patients at outpatient cancer clinics in NSW. Results are reported at the facility level. A facility may house a number of different individual clinics.

Overall ratings of care: Almost all patients (99%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (87%) or 'good' (12%). When asked to rate how well health professionals worked together, almost eight in 10 patients (78%) said 'very good' (pages 4–5).

Patient-centred care: More than eight in 10 patients (86%) said their appointment started within 30 minutes of the scheduled time. Almost eight in 10 patients (78%) said they were 'always' informed of different options when making decisions about their treatment (pages 6–7).

Safe and comfortable environment: Almost nine in 10 patients (89%) said the clinic treatment area was 'very clean', and almost six in 10 (59%) said it was 'very comfortable' (pages 8–9).

Care in rural and urban facilities: Patients in rural facilities were more likely than those in urban facilities to say the care they received from the clinic was 'very well organised', and less likely to say they were 'always' informed of different options when making decisions about their treatment (page 10).

Overall, almost all patients (99%) rated their care at cancer clinics as



'very good' 87%

'good' 12%

Overall ratings of care

Overall ratings of care reflect general measures of patient satisfaction about their outpatient cancer clinic experience.

Almost all patients (99%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (87%) or 'good' (12%) (Figure 1a). For patients who said 'very good', results ranged from 72% to 94% across facilities (Figure 2a).

More than eight in 10 patients (85%) said their care was 'very well organised' (Figure 1b). Across facilities, results ranged from 70% to 93% (Figure 2b).

When asked to rate how well health professionals worked together, almost eight in 10 patients (78%) said 'very good' (Figure 1c). Across facilities, results ranged from 66% to 89% (Figure 2c).

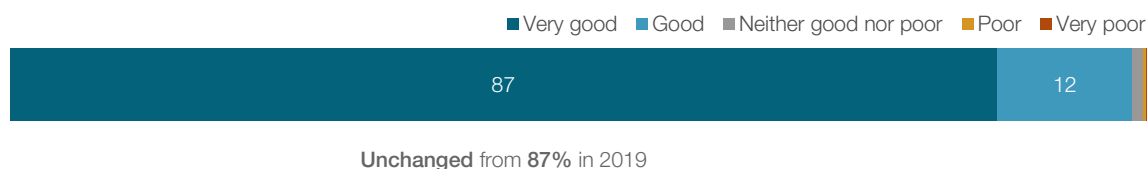
Some patient groups tend to respond more positively to surveys. This means that facilities with higher proportions of patients with these characteristics tend to have higher patient experience ratings.

To enable fairer comparison across facilities, BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level, language spoken at home and cancer type/non-cancer patient) at each facility.

Therefore, when a facility is flagged as having a significantly higher or lower result than NSW, this is more likely to reflect differences in patients' experiences, rather than differences in the facility's patient mix. For further details, please see the survey's technical supplement at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 1 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2020

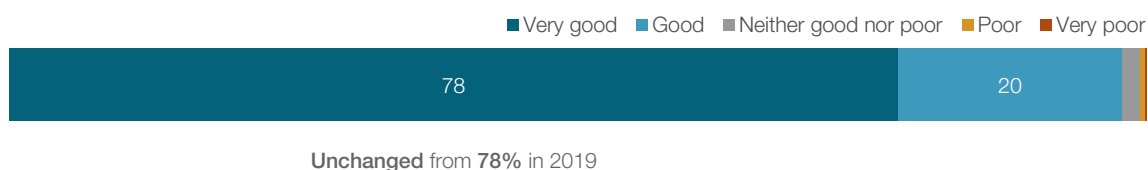
a. Overall, how would you rate the care you received from the clinic?



b. How well organised was the care you received from the clinic?



c. How would you rate how well the health professionals worked together?*



* Based on the responses of 8,059 patients (94%) who saw more than one health professional.
Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Almost all patients (97%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity



Best part of care...

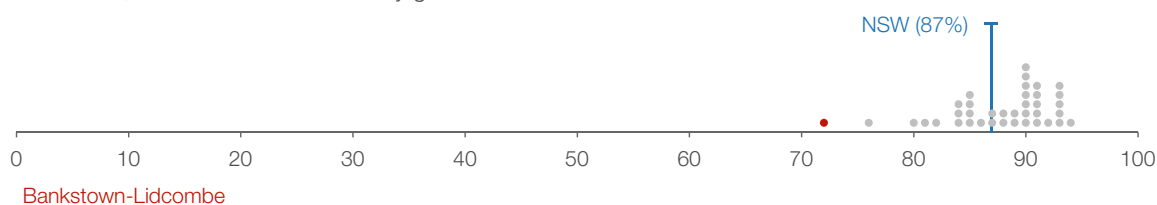
“
The staff were amazing... they remembered me each visit and I was made to feel like a friend rather than a patient.
”

In the figures below, each dot represents an individual facility's result. After accounting for patient characteristics, facilities with results significantly different from NSW are listed below the graph in order from lowest to highest. Detailed results for facilities where enough responses were received to report at the facility level are available in the BHI Data Portal and the supplementary data tables to this report at bhi.nsw.gov.au

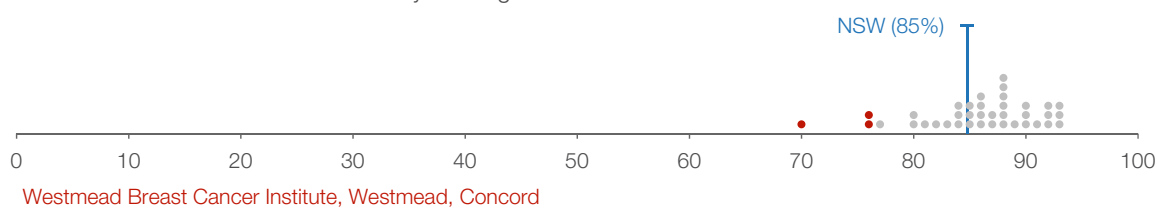
Figure 2 Percentage of patients in each facility who selected the most positive response option, 2020

Facility result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

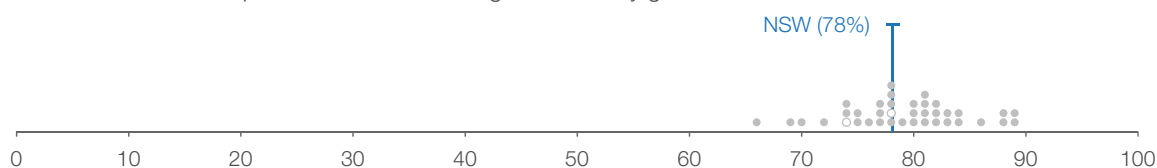
a. Overall, care in the clinic was 'very good'



b. Care received in the clinic was 'very well organised'



c. Rated how health professionals worked together as 'very good' †



† There were no facilities that had a significantly higher or lower result than NSW for this measure.

Note: A facility is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than the NSW result for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level, language spoken at home and cancer type/non-cancer patient) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in facility results with fewer respondents, facilities marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Patient-centred care

Involving patients in the planning and delivery of their own care is integral to high-quality care.

More than eight in 10 patients (86%) said their appointment started within 30 minutes of the scheduled time (Figure 3a). Across facilities, results ranged from 65% to 98% (Figure 4a).

Nine in 10 patients (90%) said they did not receive conflicting information about their condition or treatment from health professionals (Figure 3b). Across facilities, this ranged from 82% to 96% (Figure 4b). However, one in 10 patients (10%) said they did receive conflicting information.

Around seven in 10 patients (72%) said discussing treatment options was applicable to them. Of these patients, almost eight in 10 (78%) said they were 'always' informed of different options when making decisions about their treatment (Figure 3c).

This Snapshot report focuses on experiences of care in 2020 and presents changes from the previous survey year for the most positive response option for selected questions at NSW level. To see changes from the previous survey for all comparable questions at NSW, local health district and facility levels, please see the BHI Data Portal and the supplementary data tables to this report at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 3 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2020

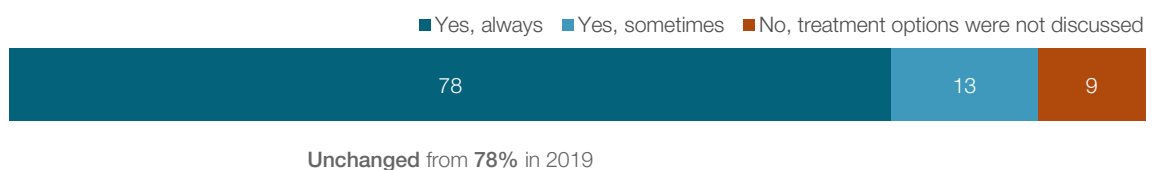
a. How long after the scheduled appointment time did your appointment actually start?*



b. Did you ever receive conflicting information about your condition or treatment from the health professionals?



c. When making decisions about your treatment, did a health professional at the clinic inform you about different treatment options?†



* Based on the responses of 8,201 patients (99%) who had an appointment.

† Based on the responses of 6,004 patients (72%) for whom the discussion of treatment options was applicable.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



Around eight in 10 patients (81%) said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment

What could improve...

“

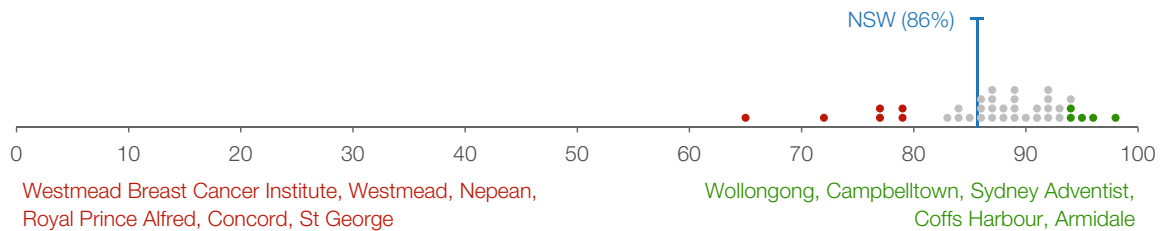
I wish I had more time with the doctor when I had questions. I know they are busy but sometimes I had big decisions to make.

”

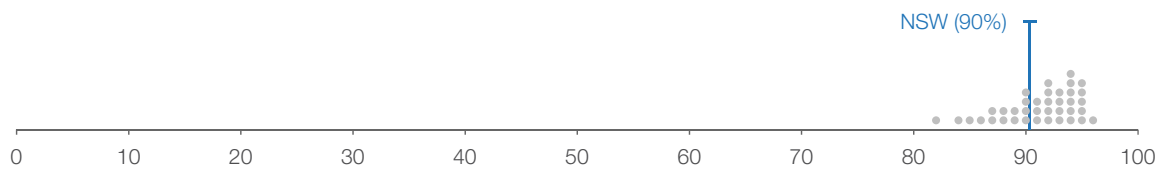
Figure 4 Percentage of patients in each facility who selected the most positive response option, 2020

Facility result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

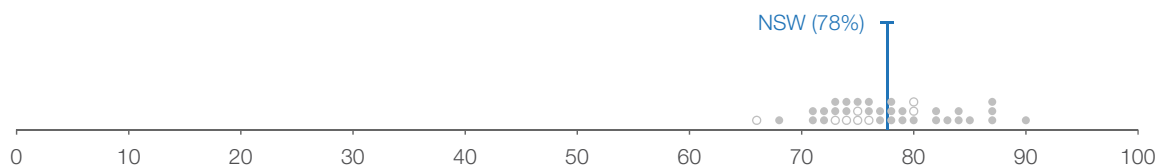
a. Appointment started 'within 30 minutes' of scheduled time



b. Did not receive conflicting information about their condition or treatment ‡



c. 'Always' informed about different treatment options when making decisions about treatment ‡



‡ There were no facilities that had a significantly higher or lower result than NSW for this measure.

Note: A facility is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than the NSW result for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level, language spoken at home and cancer type/non-cancer patient) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in facility results with fewer respondents, facilities marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Safe and comfortable environment

Patients can spend longer in outpatient cancer clinics than other care settings due to the nature of treatment. Therefore, it is particularly important a clean, safe and comfortable environment is provided.

Of the 96% of patients who had an in-person appointment, more than four in 10 (46%) said the clinic waiting area was 'very comfortable' (Figure 5a).

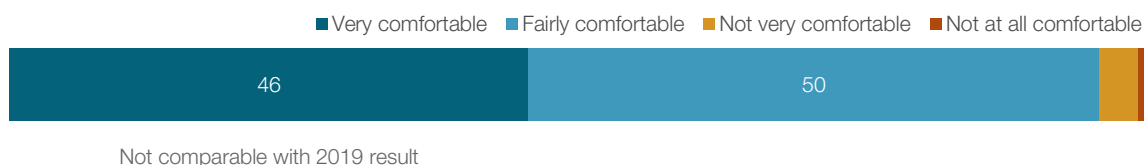
Of the 93% of patients who had an in-person appointment and used the treatment area, almost six in 10 (59%) said the treatment area was 'very comfortable' (Figure 5b). Across facilities, this ranged from 42% to 80% (Figure 6b).

Of the 86% of patients who used the treatment area and rated its cleanliness, almost nine in 10 (89%) said the treatment area was 'very clean' (Figure 5c). Across facilities, this ranged from 75% to 98% (Figure 6c).

When asked about privacy, more than nine in 10 patients (94%) said they were 'definitely' given enough privacy when being examined or treated. The same percentage of patients said they were 'definitely' given enough privacy when discussing their condition or treatment (data not shown).

Figure 5 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2020

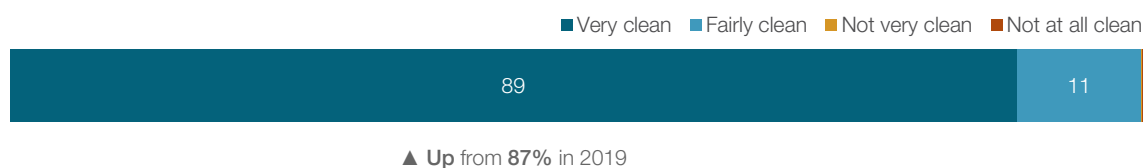
a. How comfortable was the waiting area?*



b. How comfortable was the treatment area?†



c. How clean was the treatment area?‡



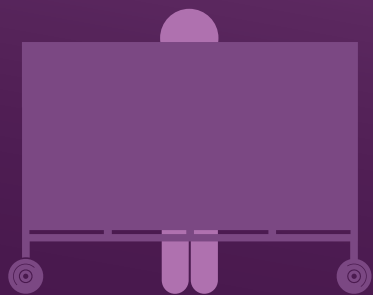
* Based on the responses of 8,275 patients (96%) who had an in-person appointment.

† Based on the responses of 7,610 patients (93%) who had an in-person appointment and used the treatment area.

‡ Based on the responses of 7,583 patients (86%) who had an in-person appointment, used the treatment area and rated its cleanliness.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Almost all patients (94%) said they were 'definitely' given enough privacy...



when being examined or treated

— and —

when discussing their condition or treatment

What could improve...

“

More privacy in the chemotherapy ward... the doctor asked personal questions which the entire ward could have heard.

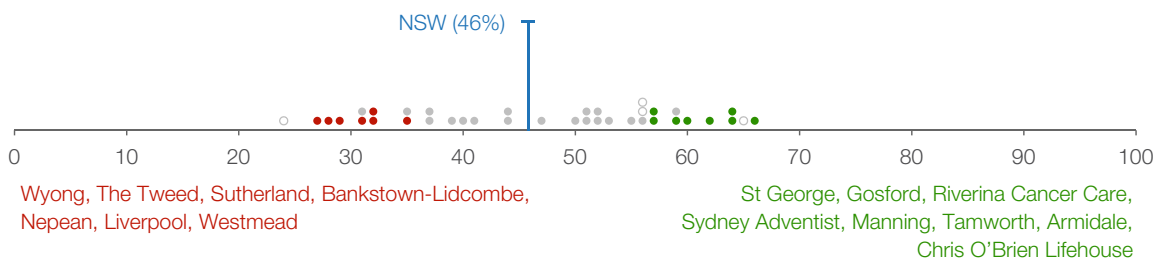
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Figure 6

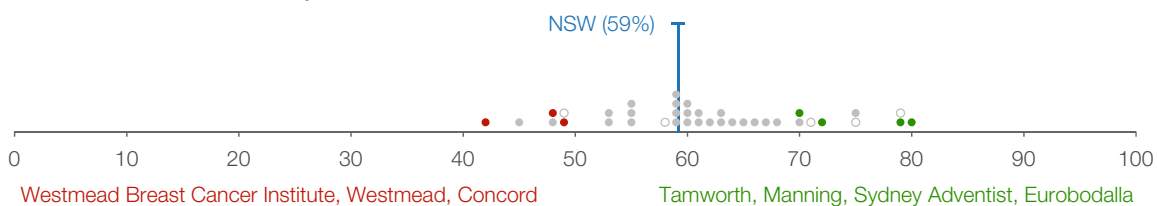
Percentage of patients in each facility who selected the most positive response option, 2020

Facility result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

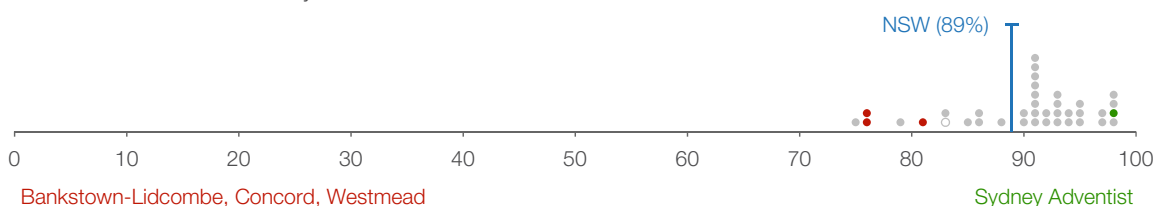
a. Waiting area was 'very comfortable'



b. Treatment area was 'very comfortable'



c. Treatment area was 'very clean'



Note: A facility is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than the NSW result for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level, language spoken at home and cancer type/non-cancer patient) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in facility results with fewer respondents, facilities marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Care in rural and urban facilities

The Bureau of Health Information conducted special analyses for this Snapshot report to examine the experiences of patients who attended outpatient cancer clinics in both rural* and urban facilities.

Patients in rural and urban facilities gave mostly positive ratings of their care. For the majority of questions, there were no significant differences in experiences between the two groups, including for overall ratings and outcomes of care. However, there were some significant differences in the experiences of the two patient groups on measures related to the care they received (Figure 7).

Patients who attended an outpatient cancer clinic in a rural facility were significantly more likely to say the care they received from the clinic was ‘very well organised’ (88%, compared with 84% in urban facilities). When making decisions about their treatment, patients in rural facilities were significantly less likely to say they were ‘always’ informed of

different options (76%, compared with 78% in urban facilities).

Patients in rural facilities were also significantly less likely to say health professionals ‘definitely’ knew enough about their medical history (80%, compared with 82% in urban facilities). However, they were significantly more likely to say their appointment started within 30 minutes of the scheduled time (90%, compared with 84% of patients in urban facilities).

Patients in rural facilities also provided significantly higher ratings on some measures related to a safe, comfortable environment (data not shown).

Detailed results for survey questions can be searched on the BHI Data Portal by patient groups, including rurality of facility which features breakdowns by ‘major cities’, ‘inner regional’ areas and ‘outer regional, remote or very remote’ areas.

Figure 7 **Percentage of patients in each facility, who selected the most positive response option, by rurality of facility, 2020**



* In the Snapshot report, urban facilities include those in areas classified as major cities by the Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+). Rural facilities include those in areas classified as inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote.
 Note: Results for rural or urban facilities are noted as being significantly higher or significantly lower after differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level and language spoken at home) have been taken into account. For further details, please see the technical supplement to this survey.

Best part of care...

“

Visiting the clinic is like visiting a friend, one who understands and cares about my welfare as I navigate my way through the most trying time of my life.

”



What could improve...

“

My GP never receives any reports from the clinic after my consultations. This makes it very hard for the doctor to assist with my ongoing care and medications.

”

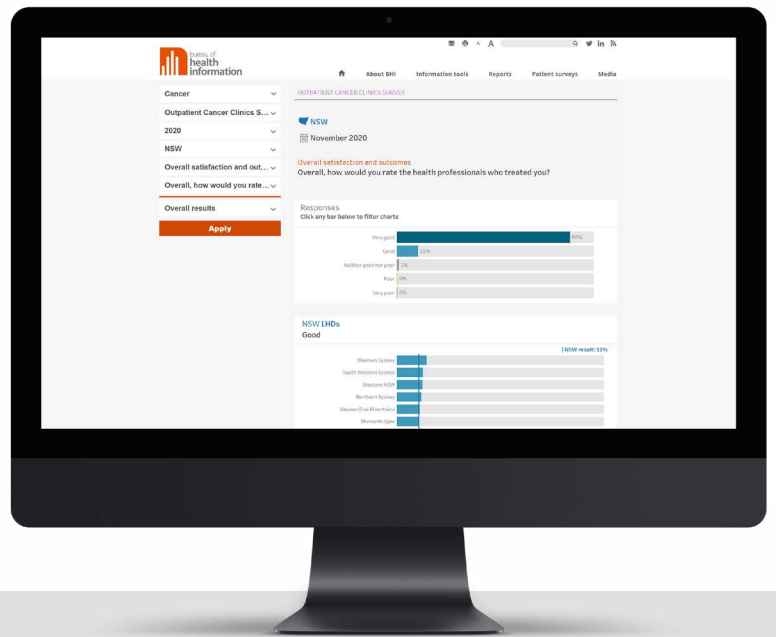


Data portal

The new **BHI Data Portal** is part of a transition to a digital-first way of reporting healthcare performance results in NSW, making them more accessible and user friendly.

The new portal allows you to find and compare activity and performance, and patient survey results, including for the larger individual facilities and local health districts.

Detailed results of the Outpatient Cancer Clinics and Adult Admitted Patient surveys are the first to appear in the new portal as part of a staged rollout over the coming months.



Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Emergency Department Patient Survey



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey



Virtual Care Survey



Maternity Care Survey



Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey

NSW Patient Survey Program

Each month we ask thousands of people in NSW to tell us about their recent experience with the public healthcare system as part of the NSW Patient Survey Program.

The surveys ask people questions about different aspects of their care such as compassion, respect and kindness, involvement in decision-making, effective communication, and a safe, comfortable environment.

Further information about our surveys can be found at bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw_patient_survey_program

About the Bureau of Health Information

BHI is a board-governed organisation that publishes independent reports and information about the performance of the healthcare system in NSW.

We aim to provide the community, health professionals and policy makers with information that enhances visibility and understanding of the performance of the healthcare system, in order to inform actions to improve healthcare and strengthen accountability.



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State Health Publication Number: (BHI) 210173
ISBN: 978-1-76081-919-4

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