

MEDIA RELEASE

Hospital Quarterly, October to December 2011 report released

The Bureau of Health Information today released the latest *Hospital Quarterly* report with information profiling performance for the busiest period of the year in NSW emergency departments.

Bureau Acting Chief Executive Kim Browne said the Christmas period traditionally sees more patients in emergency departments and fewer patients in elective surgery.

“Hospitals in NSW experienced the usual seasonal patterns over the Christmas period.

“More than 538,000 patients attended emergency departments in NSW between October and December 2011. This is 3,300 more than the same time in 2010. Every year we see a gradual increase in the number of visits to emergency departments.”

Compared to the same period in 2010, the greatest increase in emergency department attendances was for patients who required urgent treatment.

“Despite more urgent patients in emergency departments, the waiting time to begin treatment did not increase at a state level,” Ms Browne said.

The Bureau continues to report the times that 50% and 95% of patients are treated within, to give a clearer picture of the experience that patients have in NSW emergency departments.

From October to December 2011:

- 50% of triage 2 patients began treatment within 8 minutes and 95% within 36 minutes
- 50% of triage 3 patients began treatment within 23 minutes and 95% within 125 minutes
- 50% of triage 4 patients began treatment within 33 minutes and 95% within 176 minutes
- 50% of triage 5 patients begin treatment within 30 minutes and 95% within 174 minutes.

There was also an increase in numbers of patients being admitted from emergency departments into hospitals during this period.

Across NSW, 50% of patients who were admitted to hospital left the emergency department within 6 hours and 35 minutes. Most patients were admitted within 19 hours and 34 minutes. This means that 95% of patients left the emergency department for another part of the hospital between 0 minutes and 19 hours and 34 minutes after arriving. The final 5%, or 1 in 20 patients, waited longer than this time.

From October to December 2011, the total number of elective surgery procedures performed was more than 51,400. This is 1% more than the same period in 2010. This quarter, 92% of elective surgery patients received their treatment within the recommended time for their urgency category compared to 91% for the same period in 2010.

Hospital Quarterly contains state-wide information about admitted patients, emergency departments and elective surgery for public hospitals. Performance profiles for more than 80 individual hospitals in NSW are available at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

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A media backgrounder is available with key findings from Hospital Quarterly and information on interpreting new reporting measures.