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New report on performance of NSW public healthcare system released

A new report released today shows NSW patients are receiving good quality healthcare, however there are areas that could be improved.

The Bureau of Health Information's (BHI) annual report *Healthcare in Focus 2015* compares NSW's healthcare performance to 11 countries and other Australian states and territories.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque, said that the report's analysis of over 130 local and international measures shows that, overall, NSW is doing well.

"The report shows NSW gets value for its health dollar – many other countries spend more than NSW but have worse health outcomes," Dr Levesque said.

"More than three quarters of patients in NSW who used a public hospital said the care and treatment they received in hospital definitely helped them, which is a good result.

"NSW does well on a number of healthcare measures but it does not compare as well on others, so there is room to improve."

The report shows healthcare performance varied for people from disadvantaged areas* of NSW. People from these areas experienced:

- Median waiting times that were almost 100 days longer for non-urgent elective surgery in public hospitals during 2014–15
- Higher rates of hospitalisations for chronic diseases and vaccine-preventable conditions, potentially reflecting poorer patient care in the community
- Lower five-year relative survival for a range of cancers in NSW. While five year relative survival has improved over time, socioeconomic differences persist.

"People from more disadvantaged areas were more likely to report difficulties accessing the care they need," Dr Levesque said.

The report shows that there are other potential areas for improvement in NSW including:

- High rates of post-surgical complications including sepsis and venous thromboembolism (e.g. deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism)
- Relatively low rates of hip fracture surgery within the recommended timeframe of two days following admission to hospital
- Overuse of knee arthroscopy, which has been shown to have no benefit to those aged 50 and over.

"BHI's report highlights areas where NSW can learn from its successes and where the state can do better in delivering high-quality, safe healthcare to people when they need it," Dr Levesque said.

The full report is available on the BHI website at bhi.nsw.gov.au

* **Media note:** Uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of socioeconomic disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources as well as their ability to participate in society (ABS, 2006).

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