

4 June 2015

Waiting times stable and volumes up in NSW public hospitals

The latest report by the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) shows NSW public hospitals have maintained performance on waiting times and increased the volume of services provided during January to March 2015.

Hospital Quarterly provides activity and performance results for emergency departments, admitted patients and elective surgery.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque, said that compared with the same quarter last year there were 17,242 more patients visiting emergency departments, 9,032 more patients being admitted to hospital, and 374 more elective surgeries performed in NSW.

"We continue to see an overall increase in the volumes of services NSW public hospitals provide, which has been a trend over the last five years," Dr Levesque said.

The report shows that, along with the increased activity in NSW hospitals, emergency department and elective surgery performance were stable compared with the same quarter last year.

"Overall, emergency department wait times in this quarter are stable, and elective surgery performance remains strong.

"During January to March 2015, the percentage of patients who left NSW emergency departments within four hours was 75%, the same result as one year ago.

"Patients who were treated and admitted to a hospital, or treated and transferred to another hospital, after their presentation to the emergency department spent longer there this quarter compared to the same time last year," Dr Levesque said.

Some of the notable findings in the report include:

- The proportion of patients who received elective surgery within the recommended timeframes was 98%; the highest result ever reported by BHI
- The times that patients waited to start treatment in the emergency department were relatively unchanged across all urgency categories
- The total time patients spent in the emergency department was relatively unchanged
- The times patients waited to be admitted for their elective surgery were largely unchanged, although there was an increase of five days reported for non-urgent surgery
- The percentage of total hip replacement procedures performed within recommended timeframes increased from 92% to 95%. However, patients waited longer to be admitted for this procedure with the median waiting time increasing by 64 days, from 174 to 238 days; the largest increase amongst all common elective surgery procedures performed in NSW hospitals.

Five years of detailed results for more than 80 public hospitals in NSW are now available on BHI's online interactive portal Healthcare Observer at bhi.nsw.gov.au/healthcare_observer

SPOKESPERSON: Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque Chief Executive, Bureau of Health Information

MEDIA CONTACT: Rohan Lindeman (02) 9464 4452 or 0408 472 625