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## Two reports give voice to NSW emergency department patients for first time

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) today published the first results of the Emergency Department Patient Survey in two complementary reports. They reflect the experiences of almost 26,000 patients who visited NSW public hospital emergency departments (EDs) from April 2013 to March 2014.

The findings will help NSW hospitals identify areas where patients say their emergency departments are performing well and where improvements to patient experience could be made.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque said the survey results show trust and confidence in healthcare professionals was high, and most patients generally report a positive experience of care.

"Emergency departments are inherently challenging and stressful places for patients, so the fact that 52% reported their overall experience of care as 'very good' is a positive result," Dr Levesque said.

"The results do show room for improvement, particularly with regard to the physical environment — parking was a problem for over half of patients, and when the visit was for a child, less than half of parents felt the treatment area was 'definitely' suitable for children."

In the latest edition of *Patient Perspectives*, for nine of the 22 survey questions that focused on integration of care — addressing issues like coordination and continuity of care, and how well patients reported they were informed and supported by emergency department staff — at least 75% of patients selected the most positive response.

Dr Levesque said that overall the strongest results related to the provision of information to patients.

"The majority of emergency department patients reported that they received the right amount of information about their condition or treatment and an understandable explanation of the purpose of their new medication," he said.

Patients were also positive about the way ambulance staff worked with doctors and nurses, with 80% reporting the transition of care from the ambulance crew to emergency department staff as being very good.

"The transition from hospital to home was an issue for many patients however, with more than half of discharged patients reporting that they were not completely given enough information about how to manage their care at home," Dr Levesque said.

Other results identified include:

- 72% of emergency department patients were treated within an hour of arriving at the ED
- 82% reported they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity by emergency department staff
- 22% were not told what signs and symptoms to watch out for after they went home
- 11% reported 'definitely' receiving contradictory information from emergency department healthcare professionals.

*Snapshot Report* and *Patient Perspectives* are available on the BHI website. Detailed survey results and **results for individual NSW public hospitals** are available at BHI's interactive online reporting tool Healthcare Observer at [www.bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au)

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