

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Smaller hospitals show better results in emergency department and surgery wait times

The latest quarterly report from the Bureau of Health Information sheds new light on the performance of hospitals in regard to national Emergency Department (ED) targets and elective surgery waiting times in NSW.

For the first time, this edition of *Hospital Quarterly* compares similar hospitals in terms of numbers of patients and urgency of cases and looks at how these factors can affect their performance.

Overall, NSW hospitals have improved their elective surgery waiting times and emergency department performance in the April-June 2013 quarter.

There was a 6% improvement in achievement of the National Emergency Access Target (NEAT) with 65% of patients leaving the ED within four hours. This however remains below the yearly target of 71%.

"The majority of hospitals have improved on their achievement of the National Emergency Access Target. Larger hospitals from metropolitan areas could be facing a challenge meeting the target due to a higher volume and urgency of patients they treat," Bureau Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque said.

"We found that the majority of hospitals in NSW met this access target for patients that are treated and discharged, but few hospitals met the four hour target for patients that are hospitalised or transferred to another hospital."

The report also introduces a new measure, transfer of care, which is the time taken for the care of a patient to be transferred from the Ambulance paramedics to the care of ED clinicians. In the April-June quarter 82% of patients arriving at NSW EDs had a transfer of care time within 30 minutes.

The report confirms recent improvements for NSW hospitals in regard to elective surgery. There were 5% more surgeries performed in the quarter compared to the same period one year ago, with the number of non-urgent surgeries performed being the highest it has been in two years. In addition, 97% of all elective surgeries were completed on time in the quarter, an improvement of five percentage points. Many smaller hospitals and those found in rural settings performed surgeries on time for all of their patients.

"Our report indicates performance of hospitals in regard to waiting times for elective surgery does not seem to be influenced by the volume of surgeries performed or the proportion of urgent cases. The results show waiting times for surgeries of similar urgency still vary when comparing similar hospitals.

"Overall, the results seen this quarter in regard to wait times are encouraging given the increase in emergency department presentations and the increase in elective surgeries performed in NSW, however our report shows variation between hospitals remain," Dr Levesque said.

Full report and profiles for more than 80 hospitals available at [www.bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au)

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