

Stable performance in emergency departments despite increased activity

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) has today released its *Healthcare Quarterly* report showing how public hospitals and ambulance services in NSW performed during the January to March 2018 quarter.

There were more than 714,000 presentations to emergency departments, an increase of 1.6% compared with the same quarter in 2017. Despite this increase in activity, the report shows:

- The percentage of patients whose treatment started within clinically recommended timeframes was 76.2%, up 0.5 percentage points.
- Three quarters of patients (74.4%) spent four hours or less in the emergency department, up 0.6 percentage points.
- More than nine in 10 (92.1%) patients who arrived by ambulance had their care transferred to emergency department staff within 30 minutes – 0.6 percentage points higher.

“There were more than 700,000 presentations to emergency departments across NSW from January to March this year and it’s important that patients are treated in a timely manner, based on their clinical urgency, to meet their needs and ensure the best outcomes,” BHI Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson said.

“Though we have seen overall improvements in the timeliness of treatment in emergency departments at the NSW level, there are considerable differences in performance across hospitals and so these results present an opportunity for healthcare providers to compare themselves to their peers and identify where there may be opportunities to improve.”

The report shows that there were almost 280,000 ambulance responses during the quarter and, of those, more than 5,000 were for the highest priority, life-threatening cases. Paramedics reached almost three-quarters 73.1% of these cases within 10 minutes, an increase of 1.2 percentage points, and were at the scene of 90% of life-threatening cases within 15.6 minutes.

More than 52,000 elective surgical procedures were performed, up 1.7% on the same quarter last year. Median waiting times for elective surgery were 10 days for urgent procedures (unchanged), 47 days for semi-urgent procedures (up one day) and 226 days for non-urgent procedures (up five days).

For the first time, *Healthcare Quarterly* reports the number of admitted patient episodes for mental health care in NSW public hospitals. There were more than 11,000 admitted patient episodes for mental health care during the quarter, which accounted for more than 180,000 hospital bed days.

The report and data are available at bhi.nsw.gov.au