

MEDIA RELEASE

Patients offer perspectives on outpatient care in hospitals

More than 6,500 public hospital outpatients in NSW have given their verdict on what matters most to them about their care in a Bureau of Health Information report released today.

Comprehensive care, staff teamwork and courtesy are the most important drivers of high care ratings for hospitals, the *Patient Care Experiences: Outpatient services in NSW public hospitals* report finds.

"Finding out what matters most to patients shows hospitals the key areas they should target to ensure more people have positive experiences and fewer have negative experiences," Bureau Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson said.

The report shows that most outpatients are happy with the care they receive. Across NSW, 32% of people who received outpatient services rated their overall care as excellent, 34% said it was very good, 25% said it was good, 7% said fair and 2% said it was poor.

The Bureau's report shows that hospitals receiving the highest and lowest ratings of care are found right across the state and not confined to one geographical area. However, ratings do vary according to hospital type. Outpatient services in smaller, district hospitals were often rated highly by patients but there are few large, flagship hospitals in the list of top-performers.

There are also big differences between the highest and lowest rated hospitals. For example, about 50% of people describe their care as excellent in the highest rated hospitals compared with about 15% in the lowest.

The report also provides hospitals with customised information about what their own patients rated highest and lowest about their outpatient services. Across the state, aspects of care that patients rated highly included staff making the necessary arrangements for future appointments and being treated with respect. Examples of areas where patients gave low ratings were parking availability and being given a reason for their appointment running late.

The 6,500 patients surveyed were asked nearly 50 questions about the outpatient care they received. Outpatients are people who visit hospital for appointments but are not admitted. Services provided in outpatient departments include specialty clinics for diabetes, respiratory and cardiology patients and some allied health services such as physiotherapy, speech therapy and nutritional assessments.

The report and Performance Profiles providing fair comparisons for more than 50 hospitals are available at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

SPOKESPERSON:	Dr Diane Watson	Chief Executive, Bureau of Health Information
MEDIA CONTACT:	Kellie Bisset	T: +61 2 8644 2113, M: 0408 472 625