

Snapshot



Emergency department

Results from the 2021–22 patient survey





We heard from almost **22,000 people** about their experiences of care in NSW emergency departments

Emergency departments (EDs) provide patients with access to care in their time of need. EDs are open to everyone, offering specialised assessment and life-saving care for patients.

The results of the Emergency Department Patient Survey 2021–22 reflect the experiences of 21,938 patients who attended one of 77 large EDs in NSW public hospitals from July 2021 to June 2022.

The Delta and Omicron waves of COVID-19 presented great challenges to health services in NSW during this time. Hospitals needed to adapt in multiple ways to maintain sufficient capacity as well as adopt additional preventative measures to ensure the safety of staff and patients, which may have affected experiences of care.

Results for individual hospitals are available in the supplementary data tables and on the BHI Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Overall ratings of care: Almost nine in 10 patients (88%) said, overall, the care they received was ‘very good’ (61%) or ‘good’ (27%). When asked how they would rate the ED health professionals who treated them, more than six in 10 patients (65%) said ‘very good’ (pages 4–5).

Patient engagement: More than six in 10 patients (64%) said they were ‘definitely’ involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment. Eight in 10 patients (80%) said ED health professionals ‘always’ explained things in a way they could understand (pages 6–7).

Engagement at discharge: Almost seven in 10 patients (68%) said they ‘definitely’ felt involved in decisions about their discharge from the ED and more than six in 10 patients (66%) said they were ‘definitely’ given enough information about how to manage their care at home (pages 8–9).

Experiences in urban and large rural EDs: Patients who attended both urban and large rural EDs generally gave positive ratings of their care. For the majority of questions, for the most positive response option, there were no significant differences in experiences between rural and urban patients (pages 10–11).

BHI produces an annual *Healthcare in Focus* report that provides insights in key areas of health system activity and performance, including patient experience. For further insights into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the NSW health system, please explore recent *Healthcare in Focus* reports at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Overall, **88%** of patients rated their care as



‘very good’

61%

‘good’

27%

Overall ratings of care

Overall ratings of care reflect general measures of patient satisfaction about their ED experience.

Almost nine in 10 patients (88%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (61%) or 'good' (27%) (Figure 1a). For those patients who said 'very good', results ranged from 47% to 75% across EDs (Figure 2a).

More than six in 10 patients (65%) said, overall, they would rate the ED health professionals who treated them as 'very good' (Figure 1b). This ranged from 49% to 80% across EDs (Figure 2b).

When asked to rate how well ED health professionals worked together, more than five in 10 patients (55%) said 'very good' (Figure 1c). Across EDs, results ranged from 44% to 75% (Figure 2c).

BHI has introduced a new statistical approach which delivers greater precision when flagging hospitals' results as significantly different from NSW.

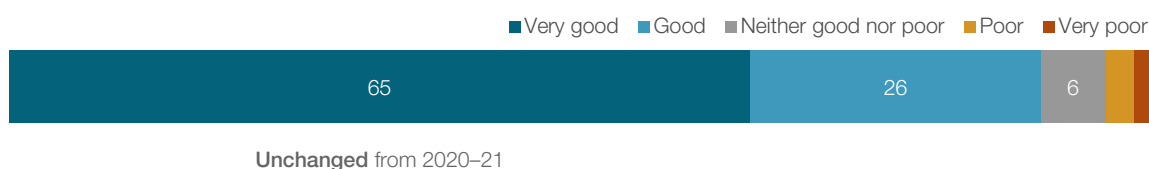
Some patient groups tend to respond more positively to surveys. This means EDs with higher proportions of patients with these characteristics tend to have higher patient experience ratings. To enable fair comparison across EDs, BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education and language spoken at home) at each ED. Therefore, when an ED is flagged as having a significantly higher (green) or significantly lower (red) result than NSW, it is more likely to reflect differences in patient experiences rather than the ED's patient mix. For further details on the new statistical model, please see the survey's technical supplement at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 1 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2021–22

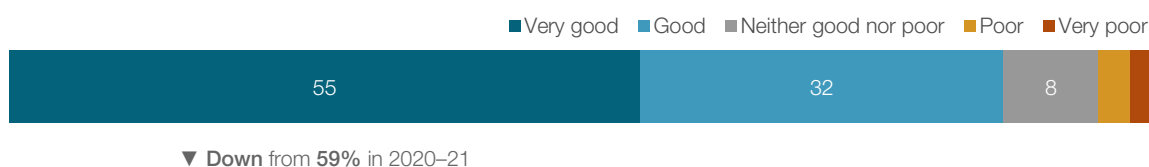
a. Overall, how would you rate the care you received while in the ED?



b. Overall, how would you rate the ED health professionals who treated you?



c. How would you rate how well the ED health professionals worked together as a team?



Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

When patients were asked whether the care and treatment helped them...

67%

said

'yes, definitely'

25%

said

'yes, to some extent'



Best part of care...

“

The treatment, care and resolution to my health concerns.

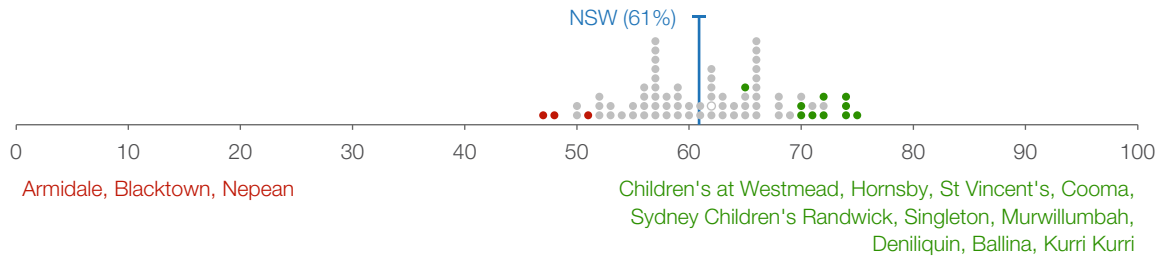
”

In the figures below, each dot represents an individual ED's result. To enable fairer comparison across hospitals, BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level and language spoken at home) at each ED. Those with results significantly different from NSW are listed below the graph in order from lowest to highest. Detailed results for all EDs are available in supplementary data tables and on the BHI Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

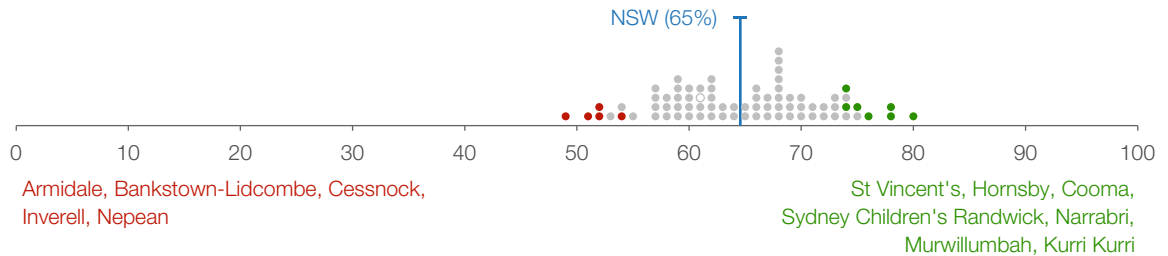
Figure 2 Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2021–22

ED result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

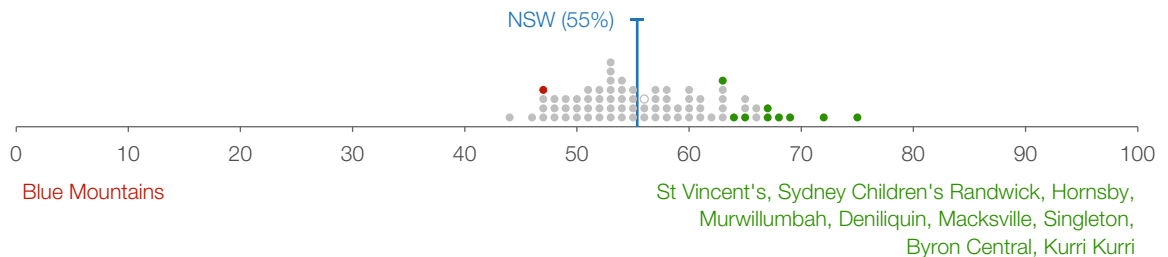
a. Overall, ED care was 'very good'



b. Would rate ED health professionals as 'very good'



c. Rated how ED health professionals worked together as 'very good'



Note: Due to greater variability in ED results with fewer respondents, EDs marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Patient engagement

Patients shared their experiences of a range of aspects of their care and treatment in the ED, including whether they were kept informed and involved in decisions about their care and treatment.

More than six in 10 patients (64%) said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment (Figure 3a). Across EDs, results ranged from 52% to 82% (Figure 4a).

Eight in 10 patients (80%) said ED health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand (Figure 3b). Across EDs, results ranged from 68% to 90% (Figure 4b).

Around eight in 10 patients (82%) said they were given 'the right amount' of information about their condition or treatment during their ED visit (Figure 3c). Across EDs, results ranged from 71% to 93% (Figure 4c).

When patients presented to ED in 2021–22, visitor restrictions were often in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Around five in ten patients (53%) said that their family members had the opportunity to talk to the ED health professionals, down 10 percentage points compared with the previous year (data not shown).

Figure 3 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2021–22

a. Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care and treatment?*



b. Did the ED health professionals explain things in a way you could understand?



c. During your ED visit, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?



* Based on the responses of 20,497 patients (96%) who wanted or needed to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment.
Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Best part of care...

“
They took good care of me and listened to the things I was saying ... and made me feel safe.
”

When patients were asked if ED health professionals listened carefully to any views or concerns they had ...



68%

said

'yes, definitely'

20%

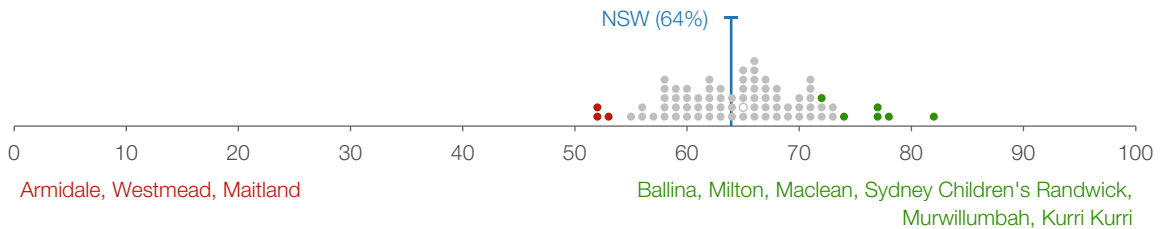
said

'yes, to some extent'

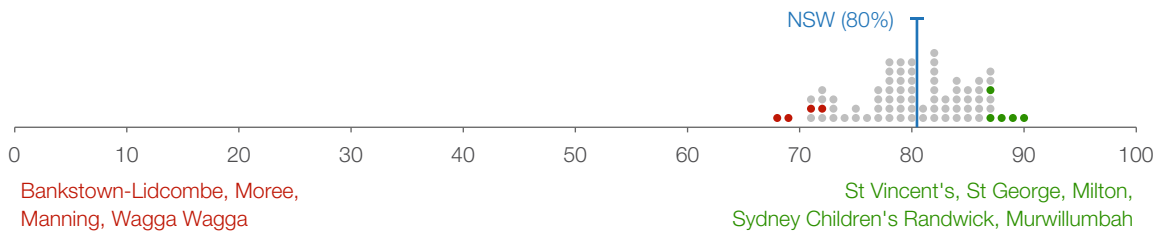
Figure 4 Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2021–22

ED result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

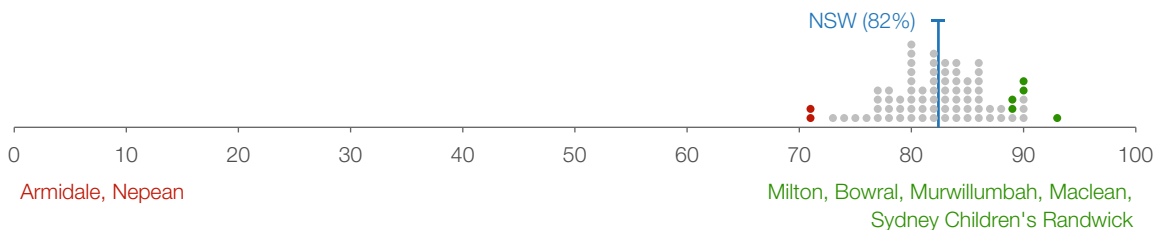
a. 'Definitely' involved in decisions about care and treatment



b. ED health professionals 'always' explained things in an understandable way



c. 'The right amount' of information was given about condition or treatment



Note: An ED is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than the NSW result for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education and language spoken at home) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in ED results with fewer respondents, ED's marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Engagement at discharge

The survey also captured patients' experiences at discharge and outcomes after leaving the ED.

Almost seven in 10 patients (68%) 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge from the ED (Figure 5a).

More than six in 10 patients (66%) said that when they left the ED, they were 'definitely' given enough information about how to manage their care at home (Figure 5b).

Around eight in 10 patients (83%) said they were told who to contact if they were worried about their condition or treatment after leaving the ED (Figure 5c).

More than six in 10 patients (64%) said they were provided with a document summarising their hospital care. Of the 77 EDs included in this survey, 14 improved on this measure by 5 percentage points or more while 11 declined by 5 percentage points or more (data not shown). More results for individual hospitals are available in the supplementary data tables and on the BHI Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 5 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2021–22

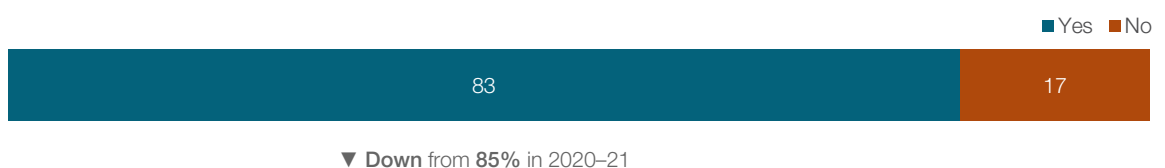
a. Did you feel involved in decisions about your discharge from the ED?*



b. Thinking about when you left the ED, were you given enough information about how to manage your care at home?†



c. Were you told who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left the ED?



* Based on the responses of 13,803 patients (92%) who wanted to be involved in decisions about their discharge.

† Based on the responses of the 14,410 patients (96%) who needed information about how to manage their care at home.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

What could improve...

“

Everything was good apart from no letter provided to my GP. Only my blood results were sent to them, so they didn't know why I had presented to ED.

”

More than six in 10 patients (64%) said they were provided with a document summarising their hospital care

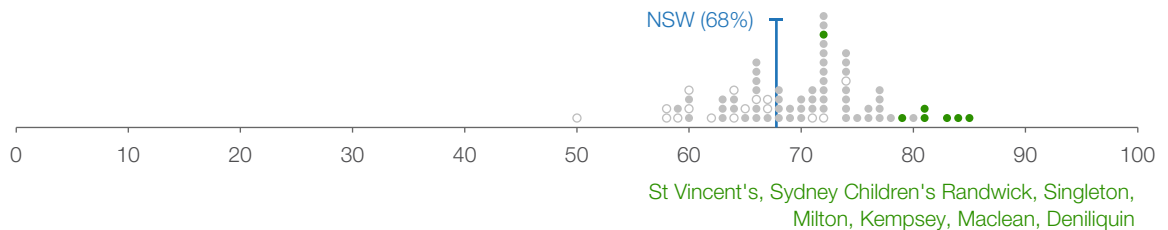


EMERGENCY

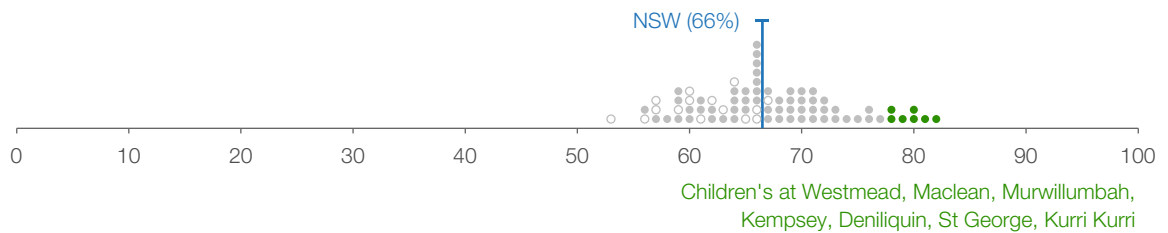
Figure 6 Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2021–22

ED result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

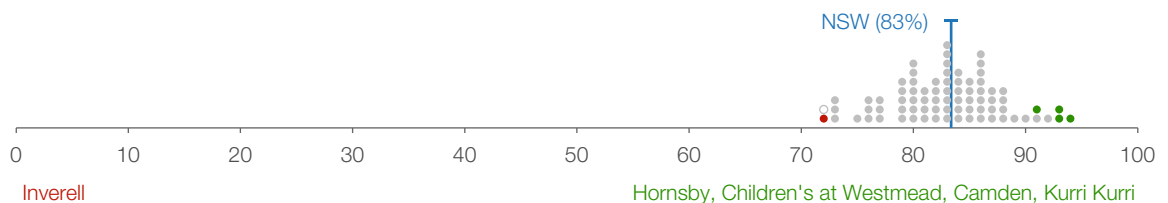
a. 'Definitely' felt involved in decisions about discharge



b. 'Definitely' given enough information to manage care at home



c. Told who to contact if worried about condition or treatment after discharge from ED



Note: An ED is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than the NSW result for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education and language spoken at home) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in ED results with fewer respondents, ED's marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Experiences in urban and large rural EDs

BHI conducted analyses for this Snapshot report to examine the experiences of the 10,899 patients who attended EDs in one of 36 urban public hospitals included in this survey, and the 11,039 patients who attended EDs in one of 41 large rural public hospitals. Experiences were compared across the most positive response options.

Patients in rural and urban EDs generally gave mostly positive ratings of their care. For most questions, there were no significant differences in experiences between rural and urban patients, including ratings of overall care and ED health professionals. There were also no significant differences in experiences related to outcomes of care.

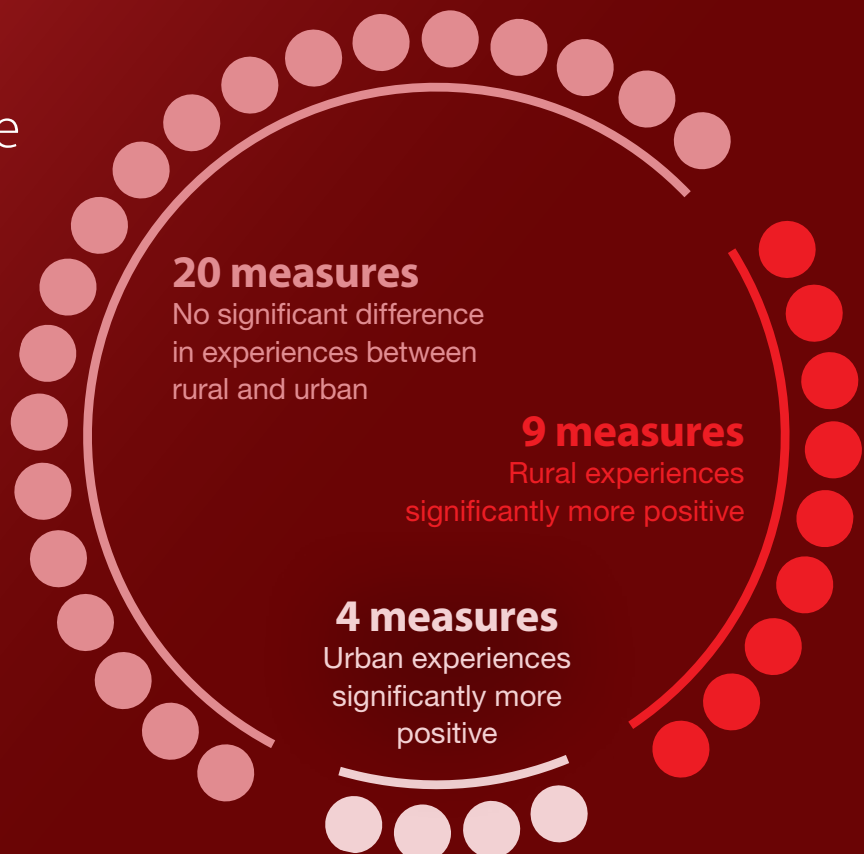
Patients in rural hospitals gave higher ratings for questions relating to involvement in decision-making and a safe, comfortable environment. For example, 78% of patients in large rural hospitals said the

treatment area was 'very clean', compared with 69% of patients in urban hospitals.

Those attending urban EDs were significantly more likely to say they were provided with a discharge summary (74%) when compared with rural EDs (43%).

Patient characteristics (age, gender, education level and language spoken at home) have been taken into account when identifying significant differences between urban and rural hospitals results. Experiences are presented across the most positive response option through results are similar when comparisons are made across all response options. For more information, see the technical supplement. Detailed results for survey questions by patient groups, including rurality of hospital, are available on the BHI Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

We compared experiences of care at urban and large rural EDs across 33 measures





EMERGENCY ENTRY

Best part of care...

“ Ours is a great little country town hospital, and has great rapport with the community. ”

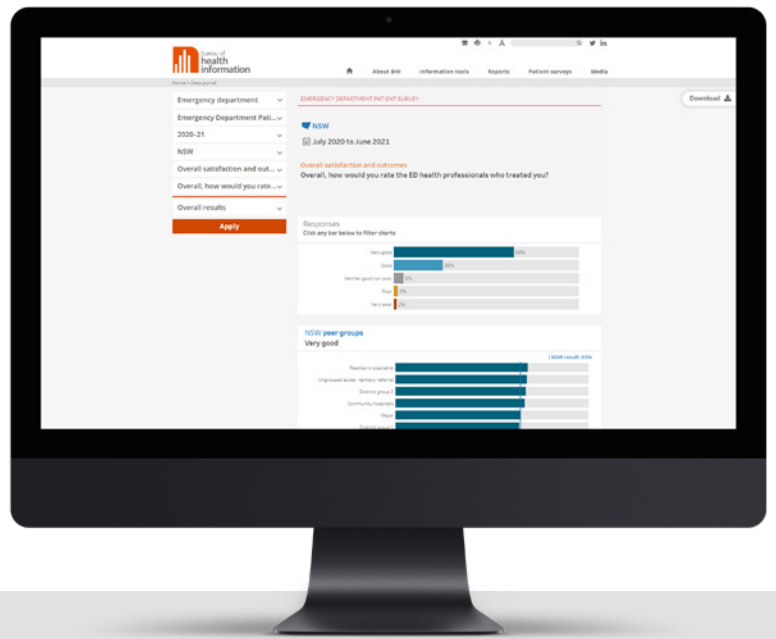
What could improve...

“ Access to GPs in rural areas. I should not have presented to ED but had no other option and needed antibiotics or my condition would have worsened. ”

Data portal

The **BHI Data Portal** is part of a transition to a digital-first way of reporting healthcare performance results in NSW, making them more accessible and user friendly.

The portal allows you to find and compare activity and performance, and patient survey results, including for the larger individual hospitals and local health districts.



Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Emergency Department Patient Survey



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey



Virtual Care Survey



Maternity Care Survey



Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey

NSW Patient Survey Program

Each month we ask thousands of people in NSW to tell us about their recent experience with the public healthcare system as part of the NSW Patient Survey Program.

The surveys ask people questions about different aspects of their care such as compassion, respect and kindness, involvement in decision-making, effective communication, and a safe, comfortable environment.

Further information about our surveys can be found at bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw_patient_survey_program

About the Bureau of Health Information

BHI is a board-governed organisation that publishes independent reports and information about the performance of the healthcare system in NSW.

We aim to provide the community, health professionals and policy makers with information that enhances visibility and understanding of the performance of the healthcare system, in order to inform actions to improve healthcare and strengthen accountability.



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