

Increased activity and stable performance in NSW hospitals and ambulance

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) has today released its *Healthcare Quarterly* report showing how public hospitals and ambulance services in NSW performed in the April to June quarter of 2017.

The report shows that more than 660,000 patients presented to a NSW public hospital emergency department, an increase of 4.2% compared to the same quarter last year. Ambulance activity increased by 2.3% with more than 274,000 responses to Triple Zero (000) calls.

BHI Acting Chief Executive, Dr Kim Sutherland, said call to ambulance arrival times in the two highest priority categories were similar to the same quarter last year despite an increase in ambulance activity.

“Call to ambulance arrival time is a valuable measure as it reflects patients’ experiences, spanning the time from when a Triple Zero call is first answered in the control centre to the time the first paramedic arrives at the scene,” Dr Sutherland said.

During the April to June quarter, 63.7% of priority 1 (emergency) incidents had a call to ambulance arrival time within 15 minutes and 95.0% were within 30 minutes. For priority 2 (urgent) incidents, 75.4% had a call to ambulance arrival time within 30 minutes and 95.3% were within 60 minutes.

The *Healthcare Quarterly* report also includes data on ambulance operational measures such as response time, which is measured from when a Triple Zero (000) call is placed ‘in queue’ for vehicle dispatch to the time the first paramedic arrives at the scene.

“Incidents classified as priority 1A are the highest priority in the emergency category and considered life-threatening cases, such as cardiac or respiratory arrest,” Dr Sutherland said.

There were 2,097 highest priority (P1A, life-threatening) cases during the quarter. Response times were within 10 minutes for 72.8% of P1A cases and within 15 minutes for 90% of P1A cases.

Overall, 146,483 patients arrived at NSW public hospitals by ambulance and 91.8% had their care transferred to hospital staff within 30 minutes.

Compared to the same quarter last year:

- 663,942 patients presented to a NSW public hospital emergency department, an increase of 4.2%
- 75.6% of patients’ treatment started within clinically recommended timeframes in NSW emergency departments, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points
- 73.1% of patients were able to leave emergency departments within four hours, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points
- 97.0% of patients received elective surgical procedures on time, unchanged from the same quarter last year
- There were 274,228 ambulance responses, an increase of 2.3%.

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