

## MEDIA RELEASE

### NSW healthcare system performance compared at an international level

A new report published today shows the NSW healthcare system compares well at an international level, but there are opportunities for further improvements in the performance of NSW hospitals.

*Healthcare in Focus 2012*, the third annual performance report by the Bureau of Health Information, compares NSW with Australia and 10 other countries. For the first time, the report also looks at performance within NSW to see if the healthcare system is delivering consistently across the state.

The report found premature mortality from cancer, from heart disease and from stroke continue to fall in NSW. The majority of people describe their overall health as excellent or very good and rate their experiences of the healthcare system positively.

"The health and well-being of NSW people is high compared to other countries. Fewer years of life are lost to cancer and heart diseases in NSW than in almost any other country compared," Bureau Acting Chief Executive Kim Browne said.

While NSW compares well internationally, the report shows that there is variation in the performance of hospitals within the state. The report looked at outcomes, processes and patient perceptions of their care and found differences between hospitals. For example:

- There was a 27 percentage point range across NSW hospitals in the proportion of emergency department patients who said they were always treated with respect and dignity.
- One in 10 heart attack patients in NSW dies within 30 days of hospitalisation - a relatively low rate of deaths internationally. However the standardised rate recorded varies across hospitals in NSW.
- Brain imaging is uniformly delivered to stroke patients by NSW hospitals, but there is wide variation in other care provided such as specialised stroke unit care for patients during their stay in hospital.

"The Bureau plans to do more detailed analyses of between-hospital variation early next year, working with clinical experts, the Agency for Clinical Innovation and others to examine patient and hospital level factors that contribute to the variation observed," Ms Browne said.

"This important work can help to identify where improvements within NSW can be made."

NSW has similar rates to most other countries of safety incidents including serious, avoidable healthcare errors and post-operative infection rates.

Other areas that the report's findings suggest that NSW could improve include reducing:

- Diabetic complications
- The high rate of hospitalisation for complications from medical and surgical care and
- Rates of unplanned readmission of patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

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*Fact sheets outlining key findings from the report are available at [www.bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au)*