

6 September 2023

Latest quarterly healthcare report provides new insights on longer stays for overnight admitted patients in NSW public hospitals

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) has today released its latest *Healthcare Quarterly* report, showing activity and performance for public health services in NSW during April to June 2023.

BHI Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson said the latest quarterly results show NSW public health services continued to experience high demand in the second quarter of this year.

“In April to June 2023, ambulance response times improved from the record long waits the same time one year ago,” said Dr Watson. “The number of elective surgery patients on the waiting list who had waited longer than recommended also halved.”

There were 357,491 **ambulance** responses – the highest of any quarter since BHI began reporting in 2010.

For the highest priority (P1A) patients with life-threatening conditions, the median response time was 8.3 minutes, compared with 9.1 minutes in April to June 2022.

There were 770,564 **emergency department (ED)** attendances – fewer than the same quarter a year earlier but slightly more than pre-pandemic levels.

65.8% of all ED patients had their treatment start on time – up slightly on 62.8% in the same quarter last year. However, just 56.7% of patients left the ED within four hours – compared with 57.6% a year earlier.

There were 60,499 **elective – or planned – surgeries** performed – 12.6% more than during the same quarter last year and slightly above pre-pandemic levels.

Almost 80% (79.0%) of all elective surgeries were performed on time – up from 74.7% a year earlier.

The number of patients on the waiting list who had waited longer than clinically recommended dropped to 9,142 – less than half the record 18,748 a year earlier.

Overnight patients **admitted to NSW public hospitals** spent 6.3 days in hospital on average – 12.5% longer than 5.6 days in April to June 2019 prior to the pandemic, following a notable increase in mid-2021.

BHI conducted special analyses which identified two principal drivers of the longer stays since mid-2021, outlined in a Special Reporting section in the main report of this issue of *Healthcare Quarterly*.

“Our analyses found patients diagnosed with COVID-19 during their admission stayed twice as long in hospital on average as other patients, and those discharged to residential aged care stayed even longer,” said Dr Watson.

“For the small cohort of patients who received a COVID-19 diagnosis and were discharged to residential aged care, the average length of stay increased further.”

Results of the Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2022

BHI has also released the latest results of the Adult Admitted Patient Survey, which reflect what almost 20,000 people said about their experiences of care as admitted patients in NSW public hospitals in 2022.

“It is pleasing to see that most patients were positive about their experiences during their hospital stay,” said Dr Watson.

For example:

- Around nine in 10 patients (92%) rated their hospital care, overall, as ‘very good’ or ‘good’.

SPOKESPERSON: Hilary Rowell, Acting Chief Executive

MEDIA CONTACT: 0408 472 625

- Around seven in 10 patients (71%) said health professionals 'definitely' listened carefully to any views and concerns they had.
- More than seven in 10 patients (74%) said their family and home situation was 'definitely' taken into account when they were discharged.

While ratings were down a little on the 2021 survey for the majority of questions, it is important to note that COVID-19 was still prevalent in NSW during the survey period and activity and length of stays were up, which may have impacted experiences.

"These survey results give healthcare professionals and system managers specific information about where they are doing well, and also areas where care could improve," said Dr Watson.

BHI's new report, *Snapshot – Adults admitted to hospital, Results from the 2022 patient survey* also compares patients' experiences in rural and urban hospitals, and examines patients' experiences of virtual care appointments (via telephone or video call) following their discharge from hospital.

Detailed results for *Healthcare Quarterly* and results of the Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2022 are available at bhi.nsw.gov.au