

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Reduced waiting times for emergency department patients

Patients attending NSW emergency departments between July and September this year waited similar or less time to begin treatment across all urgency categories than one year ago, according to the latest *Hospital Quarterly* report released by the Bureau of Health Information today.

There were about 21,000 more patients attending NSW emergency departments during the quarter. This was 4% more than the same time last year and 11% more than the same time two years ago.

"We continue to see the trend of more patients attending emergency departments, and more patients being admitted to hospital," Bureau Acting Chief Executive Kim Browne said.

"During this quarter, the time that emergency department patients waited for treatment to begin was the same, or shorter, across all of the urgency categories compared to the same quarter in 2011."

Nearly 144,000 people travelled to hospital by ambulance, 6% more than the same time last year, and 11% more than two years ago. The report shows that 57% of these patients were transferred into the care of emergency department staff within 30 minutes; less than the 61% one year ago.

For elective surgery, *Hospital Quarterly* now reports on the number of patients who are on the elective surgery waiting list in NSW, the 90th percentile waiting times for patients who received elective surgery, and the median waiting times by common procedures in NSW.

For example, during July to September 2012, in NSW:

- The median waiting time\* for coronary artery bypass surgery was 28 days.
- The median waiting time\* for total hip replacement was 157 days, and the median waiting time\* for total knee replacement was 286 days.
- The most common procedure performed was cataract extraction, with 5,732 patients receiving the procedure during the quarter.

At the end of September 2012, there were more than 67,500 patients on the elective surgery waiting list in NSW. The majority (80%) of these patients were classified in the non-urgent category, 17% were in the semi-urgent category, and 3% were urgent.

During the quarter, 93% of patients received their surgery within the timeframe recommended for their urgency category.

"Information about waiting times for elective surgery is available for more than 80 hospitals in NSW," Ms Browne said.

*\*The median waiting time is the time by which half of patients received their surgery. The other half of patients waited at least this long for their surgery.*

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