

MEDIA RELEASE

Elective surgery and emergency care on increase

The Bureau of Health Information's latest *Hospital Quarterly* places a special focus on elective surgery - doubling the number of hospitals profiled from 40 to more than 80 and showing the waiting times, numbers and types of elective surgery procedures performed.

Bureau Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson said the second issue of *Hospital Quarterly* showed increased activity across elective surgery, admitted patient episodes and emergency department attendances.

"In NSW public hospitals from July to September 2010 there were around 54,000 elective surgery procedures, 415,000 admitted patient episodes and 508,000 emergency department visits," Dr Watson said. "Admitted patient episodes are at a two-year high, up 4% on the last quarter and up 3% relative to one year ago.

"At the same time, elective surgery procedures are also at their highest level for the past two years. Waiting times for patients who had non-urgent elective surgery have fallen to 175 days, down from 205 days in the previous quarter but up from 135 days a year ago. Waiting times for patients who received urgent and semi-urgent surgery remain relatively unchanged."

The report also looks at care in more than 60 emergency departments, showing arrivals by ambulance and how long patients spend at each stage of their journey.

"NSW emergency departments treated almost 12,000 extra patients in the July to September quarter," Dr Watson said. "Patients were seen within the recommended timeframes for all triage categories except category 3 where only 69% of patients, rather than the recommended 75%, were seen in the recommended time of 30 minutes. This compares with 74% in the previous quarter."

There were 64% of patients transferred from an ambulance into the care of an emergency department within 30 minutes of arrival, rather than the target 90%. This figure was 68% in the previous quarter.

There were 61% of patients, rather than the target of 80%, admitted to hospital from the emergency department within the recommended eight-hour target. This figure was 67% in the previous quarter.

"This report charts how NSW public hospitals are performing, how use of hospitals is changing over time and how similar hospitals compare with each other. These findings inform the public and the system so care can improve," Dr Watson said.

More information about elective surgery, emergency departments and admitted patient trends are in the At a Glance supplement. Emergency department and elective surgery Performance Profiles for individual hospitals can be found at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

SPOKESPERSON:	Dr Diane Watson , Chief Executive, Bureau of Health Information
MEDIA CONTACT:	Sylvia Bell T: +61 2 8644 2105, M: 0419 211 650 F: +61 2 8644 2119
REPORT AVAILABLE:	www.bhi.nsw.gov.au