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## New report shows Aboriginal patients' experiences of care in NSW public hospitals

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) has today released a report providing insights into the experiences of thousands of Aboriginal people who received admitted patient or maternity care in NSW public hospitals.

*The Insights Series – Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care* uses new analyses to explore Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people's experiences of care, and for Aboriginal patients it examines differences in experiences at rural and urban hospitals, trends over time, and the impact of Aboriginal Health Workers' involvement in delivering care.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Diane Watson, said the report provides important information on where the NSW healthcare system is performing well, and where services could be improved to better meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

"More than 8,000 Aboriginal people who were admitted to a NSW hospital from 2014 to 2019 and almost 300 women who gave birth in a NSW public hospital in 2019 told us about their experiences," Dr Watson said.

"While there have been gains made in some important areas, Aboriginal people reported significantly less positive experiences than non-Aboriginal people across many key areas of their care."

### Admitted patient care

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients admitted to hospital gave similar, mostly positive ratings of their overall hospital care, and of the doctors and nurses who treated them.

Ratings of care provided by Aboriginal admitted patients improved significantly from 2014 to 2019 in a number of areas, including overall ratings of nurses and whether they were given enough privacy. This pattern of improvement was particularly evident in rural hospitals.

"However, Aboriginal patients admitted to hospital were significantly less likely to provide positive ratings of communication, information provision and being treated with respect and dignity than non-Aboriginal patients," said Dr Watson.

"For example, more than seven in 10 Aboriginal patients (73%) said health professionals 'always' explained things in an understandable way, but that figure was eight in 10 (81%) for non-Aboriginal patients."

### Maternity care

Aboriginal women receiving maternity care gave significantly lower ratings of care than non-Aboriginal women, particularly around their experiences during labour and birth and the care they received in hospital following the birth. For example:

- 77% of Aboriginal women said they 'always' had confidence and trust in the health professionals who cared for them during labour and birth, compared with 85% of non-Aboriginal women
- 73% of Aboriginal women said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were 'always' respected by health professionals, compared with 82% of non-Aboriginal women.

Dr Watson highlighted practical lessons from the report: "Our analysis provides a clear message about the importance of Aboriginal Health Workers, with people who were supported by these specialised staff reporting significantly more positive experiences across a wide range of areas."

*The Insights Series – Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care* – and more detailed results in supplementary data tables – is available at [bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://bhi.nsw.gov.au)