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## New report shows record demand for NSW ambulance services and emergency departments

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 January to March 2023.

BHI has also released survey results today that reflect patients' experiences of ambulance services.

BHI Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson said the latest quarterly results show NSW public health services were once again very busy during January to March 2023.

"Ambulance services and emergency departments experienced record demand as the upward trend in activity that began before the pandemic continued," said Dr Watson.

There were 347,720 **ambulance** responses – the highest of any quarter since BHI began reporting in 2010.

"Despite the increasing demand, ambulance response performance has continued to improve following record long response times in mid-2022," said Dr Watson.

- 44.1% of 'emergency – priority 1' ambulance cases were reached within 15 minutes
- 64.6% of the highest priority (P1A) responses arrived within 10 minutes.

There were 770,089 **ED** attendances – the highest of any January to March quarter since BHI began reporting in 2010.

"While there was gradual improvement again on the time patients waited to start their treatment, they continued to wait longer and spend longer in the ED than before the pandemic," said Dr Watson.

- 67.4% of all patients, and 54.9% of triage 2 patients, had their treatment start on time – both the lowest of any January to March quarter since 2010.
- 58.2% of all patients spent less than four hours in the ED – the lowest for a January to March quarter since 2010.

There were 54,820 **elective – or planned – surgeries** performed in the January to March quarter.

Patients continued to experience long waits for non-urgent elective surgery as the effects of suspensions of services during the pandemic continued to be felt. One in 10 patients who received non-urgent surgery during the quarter waited longer than 523 days.

Dr Watson said: "While the overall waiting list remained high at 96,857 at the end of March, the number of patients on the list who had waited longer than clinically recommended dropped by almost a quarter (24.4%) from the previous year to 14,067."

### **The Insights Series: Patients' experiences of ambulance services**

This two-page report presents key insights into the experiences of 1,230 patients who arrived by ambulance to one of 76 large NSW EDs between July and September 2022 and responded to specially tailored questions in the Emergency Department Patient Survey.

"Patients were overwhelmingly positive about their ambulance care," said Dr Watson.

"Overall, almost all patients (98%) said their ambulance care was 'very good' or 'good' and BHI's analyses showed when patients experienced effective communication, well-coordinated care and kind and caring ambulance staff they were most likely to offer the most positive rating."

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The *Insights* report also includes analyses that shows people offered similar ratings of ambulance care across different patient groups on most questions, while identifying those areas where there was some variation.

Detailed results for *Healthcare Quarterly* and *The Insights Series: Patients' experiences of ambulance services* are available at [bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://bhi.nsw.gov.au)