

Survey results

# Patients' experiences of emergency care in small rural hospitals in 2023



The Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey 2023 results reflect the experiences of **5,107 patients** who received emergency care in one of **81 small rural public hospitals** (including community hospitals and multipurpose services categorised in peer groups D, F3 and F8) in NSW between January and March 2023. Results are available for individual hospitals, local health districts and NSW.

This report highlights key findings in relation to patients' experiences across a range of aspects of care for patients attending small emergency care centres in rural and regional areas.

These findings highlight where there was significant variation in results for small emergency care centres when compared with NSW, where hospital results improved or declined compared with the previous survey (2019), and important measures of experience based on evidence and stakeholder input.



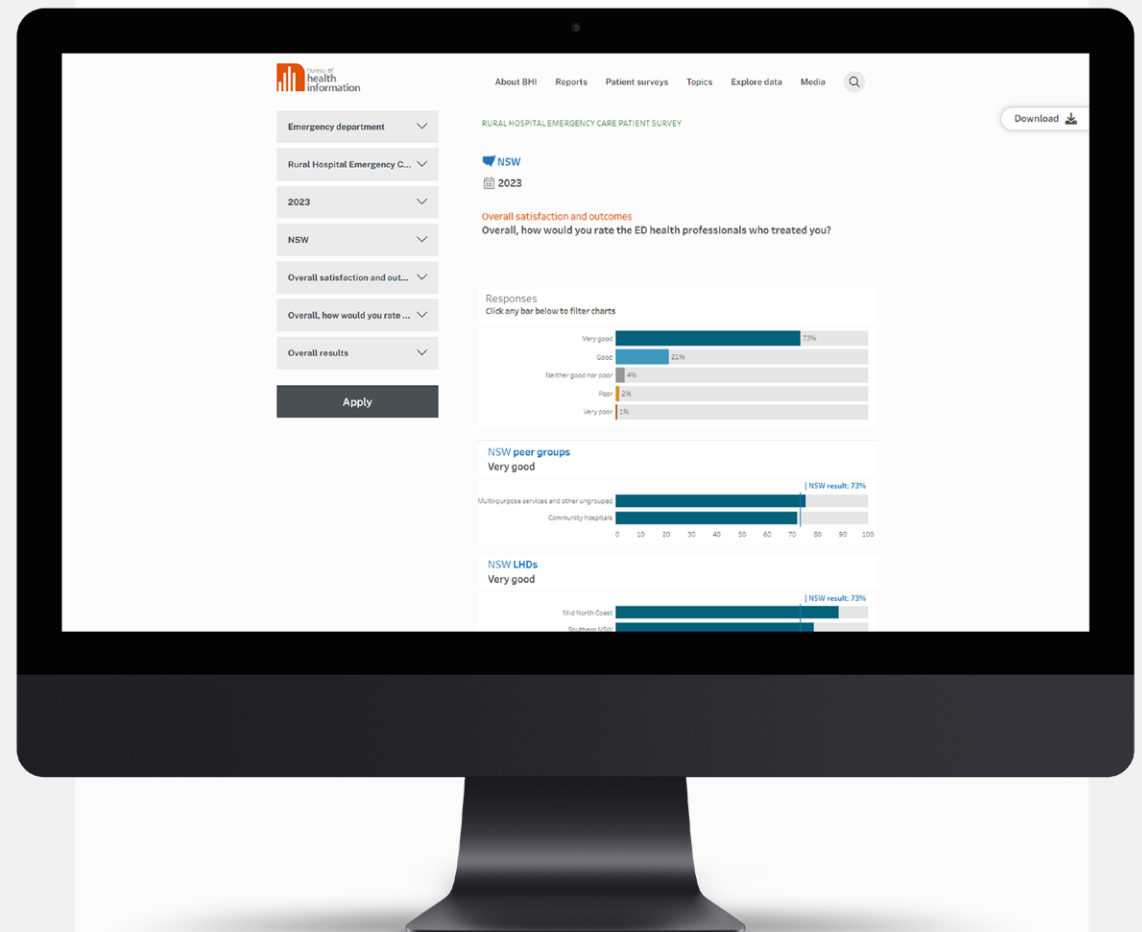
## Interactive data

# Supplementary data tables

The supplementary data tables are a good starting point to see an overview of your local hospital's performance before a more detailed search in the Data Portal. Explore results for the most positive response option (e.g. 'very good') for individual hospitals, local health districts (LHDs) and NSW. The tables include green and red flags for results significantly higher or lower than NSW, and comparisons with the 2019 results.

# Bureau of Health Information Data Portal

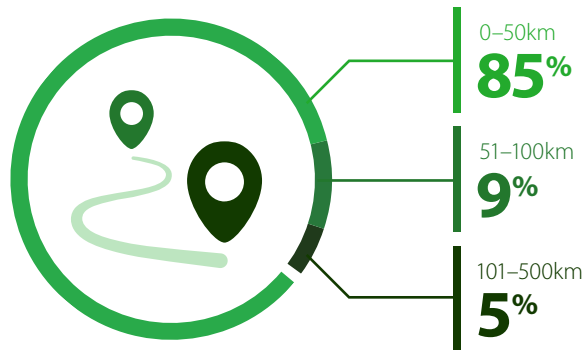
The BHI Data Portal allows you to find and compare patient survey results across questions for all response options. Detailed results, including trends, are provided for individual hospitals, LHDs and NSW. Survey results can also be explored for various patient groups.



## Accessing care

People living in rural areas may face unique challenges accessing healthcare, including the need to travel long distances and the availability of services.

Distance patients travelled to the ED...



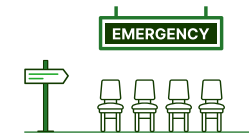
**77%**

said they travelled to the ED by car



**95%**

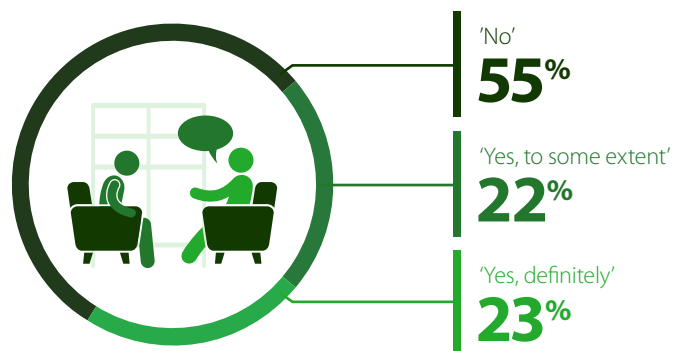
said the ED they attended was their nearest ED



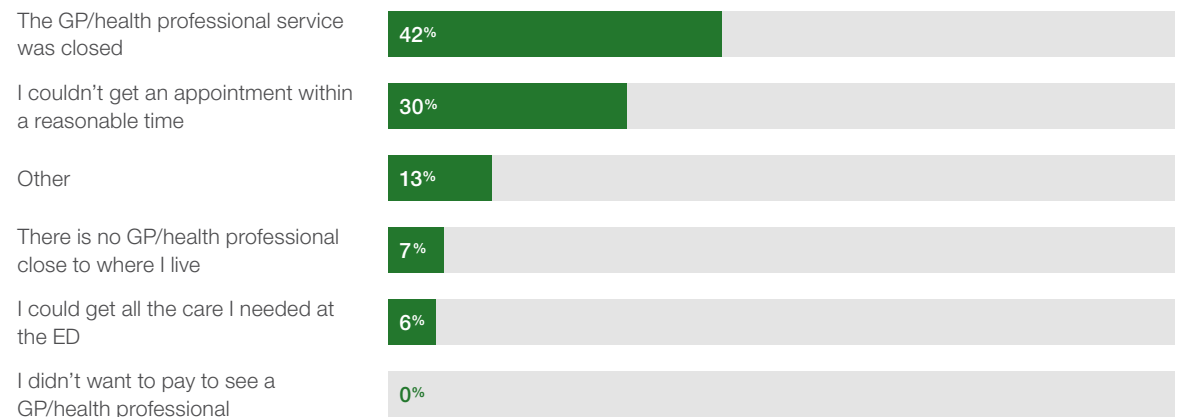
**91%**

said it was 'not difficult at all' to get to the ED

When asked whether they thought their condition could have been treated by a GP or other health professional, patients said...



Patients said the reason they did not see a GP or other health professional was...\*



Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

\*Based on the responses of the 1,922 patients who said that at the time, they thought their condition 'definitely' or 'to some extent' could have been treated by a GP or other health professional.

Note: Respondents were able to select multiple response options.

# Overall satisfaction and outcomes

The majority of patients were positive about the emergency care they received from small rural hospitals. However, ratings for more than half of all comparable questions (16 of 27) declined compared with the previous survey (2019).

Most patients (94%) said, overall, the emergency care they received from small rural hospitals was



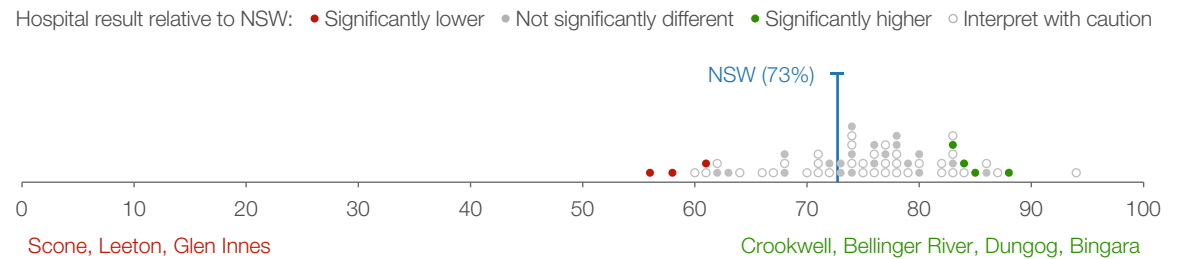
For patients who said 'very good', the range of results across hospitals (56% to 94%) was one of the widest for the survey. This result declined by 5 percentage points compared with 2019. 13 hospitals declined by 5 percentage points or more.

**83%** of patients said the care they received was 'definitely' safe and high-quality.

Across hospitals, results ranged from 69% to 94%.

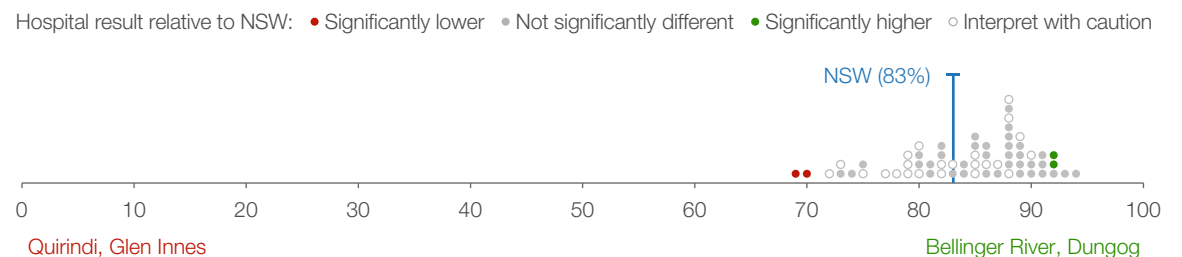
BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics at each hospital. Hospitals with fewer respondents, marked 'Interpret with caution', are not compared with the NSW result. For more details, see the [technical supplement](#).

## Percentage of patients in each hospital who said, overall, the care they received was 'very good', January to March 2023



“ The staff were open and caring, knowledgeable and professional. My pain levels were managed and my transfer was handled in a timely manner. ”

## Percentage of patients in each hospital who said the care they received was 'definitely' safe and high-quality, January to March 2023



## Overall satisfaction and outcomes

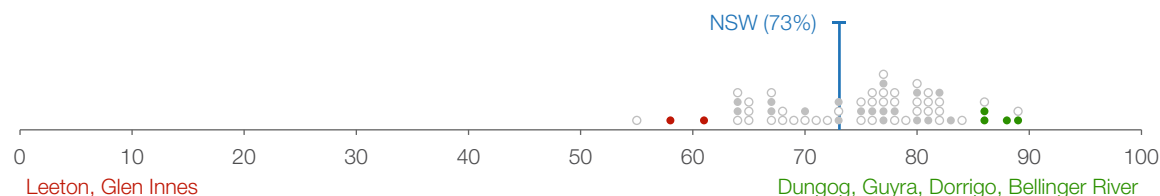
**73%** of patients said overall, the health professionals who treated them were 'very good'.

This result had a comparatively large number of hospitals with results significantly higher than NSW.

BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics at each hospital. Hospitals with fewer respondents, marked 'Interpret with caution', are not compared with the NSW result. For more details, see the [technical supplement](#).

### Percentage of patients in each hospital who rated the health professionals who treated them as 'very good', January to March 2023

Hospital result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution



“As in most country towns, I knew the staff personally. Their care was professional and understanding.”

## Timely and coordinated care

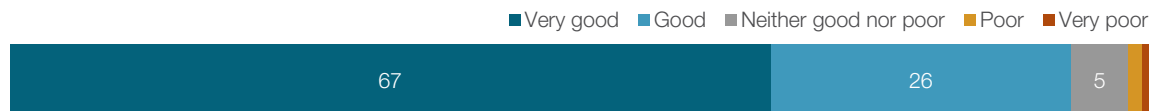
**67%** of patients rated how health professionals worked together as 'very good'.

This result declined by 6 percentage points compared with 2019.

9 hospitals declined by 5 percentage points or more.

### Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

How would you rate how well the ED health professionals worked together as a team?



▼ Down from 73% in 2019

“[What most needs improving is] better communication between doctors and staff, especially once the doctor has left.”

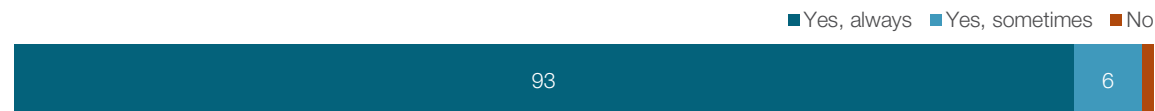
## Compassion, respect and kindness

**93%** of patients said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity while in the ED.

This result had the largest number of hospitals (14) that improved by 5 percentage points or more compared with 2019.

### Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

Were you treated with respect and dignity while in the ED?



▲ Up from 92% in 2019

“

[The best part was] friendly, caring people! Everyone I met treated me with care and respect. I am grateful to them all.

”

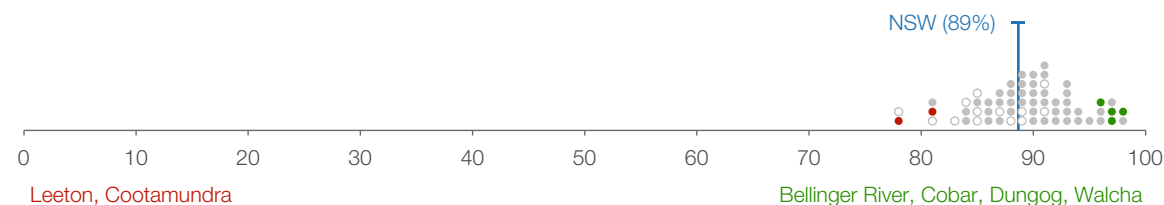
## Safe, comfortable environment

**89%** of patients said they were 'always' given enough privacy during their ED visit.

This result had a comparatively large number of hospitals with results significantly higher than the NSW result.

### Percentage of patients in each hospital who said they were 'always' given enough privacy during their ED visit, January to March 2023

Hospital result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution



BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics at each hospital. Hospitals with fewer respondents, marked 'Interpret with caution', are not compared with the NSW result. For more details, see the [technical supplement](#).

## Clear information

**87%** of patients said they were given 'the right amount' of information about their condition or treatment during their ED visit.

This result declined by 4 percentage points compared with 2019.

This result had the largest number of hospitals (14) that declined by 5 percentage points or more compared with 2019.

## Effective communication

**72%** of patients said that if a family member or someone else close to them wanted to talk to the ED health professionals, they 'definitely' got the opportunity to do so.

This result declined by 7 percentage points compared with 2019 – one of the largest declines.

3 hospitals declined by 5 percentage points or more.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

### Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

During your ED visit, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?

■ The right amount ■ Too much ■ Not enough



▼ Down from 91% in 2019

“

The part of my care that needs improving was the communication. At times I felt I was being left in the dark about my own condition.

”

### Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

If your family members or someone else close to you wanted to talk to the ED health professionals, did they get the opportunity to do so?

■ Yes, definitely ■ Yes, to some extent ■ No ■ Don't know/can't say



▼ Down from 79% in 2019



## Involvement in decision-making

**71%** of patients said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment.

This result declined by 6 percentage points compared with 2019 – one of the largest declines.

10 hospitals declined by 5 percentage points or more.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Information at discharge

**33%** of patients said upon leaving the ED, they received a document summarising their hospital care (e.g. a digital or physical copy of the letter to their GP or a discharge summary).

This result improved by 5 percentage points compared with 2019 – the largest improvement.

### Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care and treatment?



▼ Down from 77% in 2019

“

I felt irrelevant; the communication was overwhelmingly between the nurse and the doctor.

”

“

The nurses consulted and included me in decisions made... the treatment given was consistent with later treatment by my GP and community health which eventually led to my full recovery.

”

### Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

Did you receive a document summarising your hospital care (e.g. a digital or physical copy of the letter to your GP or a discharge summary)?

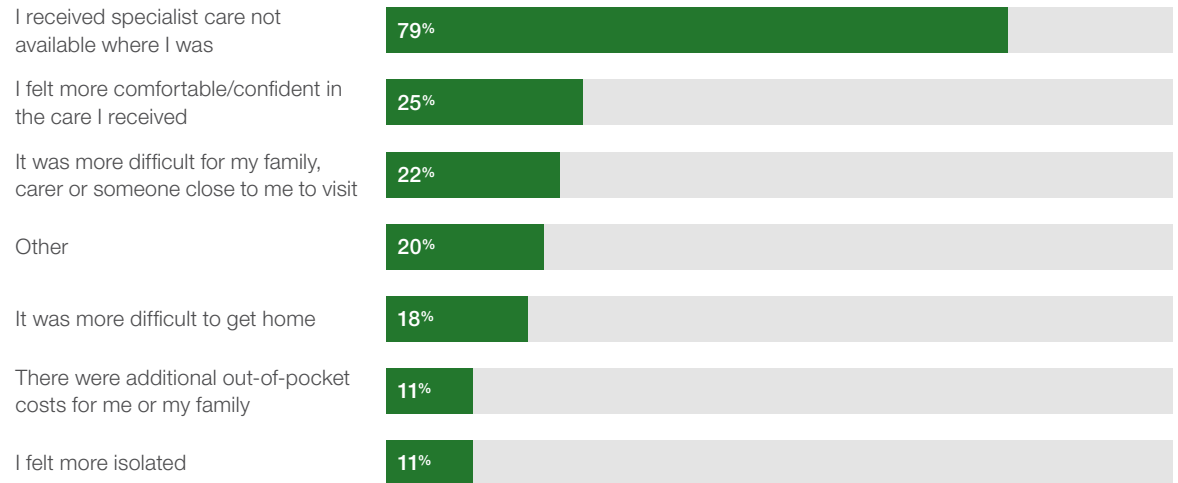


▲ Up from 28% in 2019

## Patients transferred to another hospital

**16%** of patients said they were transferred from the ED to another hospital for further treatment.

When asked in what ways the transfer affected them, they said...\*



\*Based on the responses of the 740 patients who said that they were transferred to another hospital for further treatment.  
Note: Respondents were able to select multiple response options.

## Follow-up care after leaving hospital

**59%** of patients said they received follow-up care from a hospital specialist, GP or other healthcare provider.

89% of these patients said the care was 'definitely' (68%) or 'to some extent' (21%) well coordinated between the health professionals involved.

Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, January to March 2023

Was the follow-up care well coordinated between the health professionals involved?†



†Based on the responses of the 2,760 patients who said they received follow-up care after their emergency care visit.



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Please check the online version at **bhi.nsw.gov.au** for any amendments or errata.

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