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## Patients rate their emergency department care during COVID-19 pandemic

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) has today released patient survey results reflecting the experiences of almost 21,000 patients who were admitted to 77 large emergency departments (EDs) in NSW in 2020–21.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Diane Watson, said patients who responded to the Emergency Department Patient Survey 2020–21 gave mostly high ratings of the care they received.

"Patients provided feedback about their visits to the ED during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21, when there were significant changes in how services were delivered," said Dr Watson.

"Almost nine in 10 patients (89%) said, overall, their care was 'very good' or 'good'."

When compared with the 2019–20 survey, patients also provided notably higher ratings on some measures:

- Almost eight in 10 patients (79%) said ED staff checked on their condition while they were waiting to be treated – up from 75% in 2019–20.
- More than four in 10 patients (46%) said they were told by ED staff how long they might have to wait for treatment – up from 40% in 2019–20.
- More than six in 10 patients (65%) said they were provided with a discharge summary before leaving the ED – up from 62% in 2019–20.

Dr Watson said the survey results also provided information about where patients think there is room for improvement in the care they received. For example, almost one in five 10 patients (19%) said they received contradictory information about their condition or treatment.

"Healthcare professionals and system managers can now use these results to see those areas where patients provided positive ratings of their care, and where they can focus improvement efforts," said Dr Watson.

The Snapshot report also includes special analyses of patients' experiences in rural and urban EDs.

"For most questions, there was no significant difference in experiences between patients in large rural and urban EDs, including for overall ratings of care, ratings of health professionals and outcomes of care," said Dr Watson.

However, there were some differences, for example in large rural EDs:

- Almost seven in 10 patients (67%) said they definitely felt involved in decisions about their care and treatment, compared with 64% in urban EDs.
- Around seven in 10 patients (71%) said they definitely felt involved in decisions about their discharge, compared with 67% in urban EDs.

On the other hand, in large urban EDs, more than seven in 10 patients (75%) said they were provided with a document that summarised their care, compared with 45% in rural EDs.

The Snapshot report also includes findings for key aspects of care, including variation across 77 hospitals, and monthly trends in patient experience. More detailed results, including for individual EDs, are available in the supplementary data tables and the BHI Data Portal at [bhi.nsw.gov.au](https://bhi.nsw.gov.au)

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