



**30 March 2009**

### ***Caring Together: New health data bureau***

Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today announced the establishment of an independent bureau to make hospital data more transparent and enable information analysis at the local level to improve patient care.

“The Bureau of Health Information, to start by July this year, is part of the NSW Government’s *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW* developed in response to the Garling Report,” the Minister said.

“During extensive consultations with doctors and nurses across the State there was a call for greater information upon which to base decisions at the local level.

“Through the Bureau, a range of performance data will be publicly reported at State, Area Health Service, as well as both a hospital and a clinical unit/service level so staff have the information they need to make the best decisions for patients.

“In addition to performance data, over time new measurements will be developed to provide a more comprehensive way of seeing how patients in NSW public hospitals are being looked after, not just how quickly they are seen,” Mr Della Bosca said.

Subject to further consultation with clinicians, some of the new measurements may include:

- Clinical performance including the outcome and appropriateness of treatment.
- Reporting to the community on the safety and quality of the clinical care.
- The costs associated with the care provided.

The functions of the Bureau of Health Information will include:

- Producing regular and timely reports on the performance of the NSW health system; in particular on waiting times, Emergency Department performance and hospital infection rates
- Developing and distributing tools to allow users to interrogate data.

“The focus of the Bureau will be to ensure patient care data can be used on an on-going basis to show trends and areas that need improvement,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“The Bureau of Health Information is a key step towards transparent public reporting and better analysis of information, all directed to improve health care for patients.

“While NSW Health already publishes a wide range of information on its website, as recommended by Commissioner Garling, the Bureau will provide an independent source of information for the community, clinicians and the media,” the Minister said.

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The Bureau will be a statutory health corporation with a board appointed by the Minister for Health, similar to the governance model which currently applies to the Clinical Excellence Commission.

“The focus of the *Caring Together* action plan is to promote a culture in hospitals where the care and treatment of the patient is at the centre of everything we do,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“As the Garling Report points out, NSW has one of the better public health care systems in the developed world but we need to meet the challenges of the future, including a growing and ageing population.

“This initiative is only the beginning of important changes to continue to deliver the best possible health care and to ensure on-going patient care and safety.

“The full details of the *Caring Together* initiative will be announced tomorrow (30 March),” he added.