



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General, Minister for Health, Minister for
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HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVES DESPITE MORE DEMAND

NSW Minister for Health John Hatzistergos today praised the great teamwork of doctors and nurses in reducing waiting times and performing more surgery despite a rise in Emergency Department presentations.

Mr Hatzistergos said the latest Performance Report for the March to June quarter reflects the dedication of hospital staff in providing high quality treatment in the face of increased demand.

“A total of 112,502 patients were admitted to hospital through Emergency Departments in the three months to June, a 2.2% increase on the same period last year,” the Minister said.

“Presentations at Emergency Departments rose by 4.9% from 485,434 to 509,390.

“Waiting times for planned surgery improved with 88 per cent of booked surgical patients admitted within clinically recommended timeframes, a one per cent increase on the same period in 2008.

“The number of patients admitted to hospital for planned procedures this quarter was 164,439, a slight decrease of 825 on 2008 figures.”

Median waiting times for planned surgery in the report show for:

- Category 1 patients where it's desirable admissions occur within 30 days, the median time was 10 days;
- Category 2 patients where it's desirable admissions occur within 90 days, the median time was 51 days; and
- Category 3 patients where it's desirable admissions occur within 365 days, the median time was 134 days.

NSW public hospitals at a glance:

March-June 2009	Same period last year	Difference
509,390 attendances at Emergency Departments	485,434	Up 4.9%
112,502 admissions from Emergency Departments	110,076	Up 2.2%
387,806 admitted patients	387,091	Up 0.2%
average stay of 3.5 days	3.6 days	Down 0.1 days
88% of planned surgery patients treated on time	87%	Up 1%

Based on these figures, on average each day in NSW public hospitals:

- 5,598 people attend an Emergency Department;
- 1,236 people are admitted from an Emergency Department;
- 4,262 people are discharged from hospital; and
- 191 babies are born.

Mr Hatzistergos said under the Government's *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW*, even better models of care and enhanced services are being implemented, including expanded hospital in the home services in the community.

"Thirty more nurses will also be recruited for a number of Emergency Departments throughout the state later this year, to improve and fast-track patient care," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"Clinical Initiative Nurses can organise an x-ray so the results are available when the patient is seen by a doctor, and organise pain relief or a reassessment of priority for a patient if their condition changes while waiting.

"This will assist in further reducing waiting times for patients in the Emergency Department."

Mr Hatzistergos said the impact of swine flu from June through to August challenged many of our hospitals.

"Our doctors, nurses and other health staff responded magnificently to this challenge and we should all be very proud of them," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"Some non urgent surgery was deferred during this time and we are working together with health services to ensure these patients undergo their surgery and our planned surgery program gets back on track," he added.