



Message from the Co-Chairs

Emergency Department Taskforce



Emergency Department Taskforce Newsletter

Issue 1: March 2024

Dear colleagues,

An exciting part of our role is to lead change together in NSW Health. We have a unique opportunity to address the continuing pressures on our emergency departments (EDs) and improve ED wait times through the establishment of an ED Taskforce.

Our public hospital EDs treat over 3 million people a year, more than any other state or territory. Our EDs are treating more patients with higher acuity and complex needs than ever before who require more time and resources for care (triage categories 1, 2 and 3). At the same time, lower acuity ED presentations (triage categories 4 and 5) account for almost half of all ED presentations. In addition, there are also challenges accessing primary and alternative care services in the community.

On 6 December 2023, the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health announced the establishment of an ED Taskforce to improve ED wait times, access to care and to explore innovative solutions to divert pressure from our hospitals. The Taskforce provides an opportunity to make important changes that could positively transform patient care in our EDs.

The time limited ED Taskforce held its first meeting on the 8 February 2024, with the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health, the Hon Ryan Park MP, and the Secretary NSW Health, Ms Susan Pearce AM, in attendance. The Taskforce brings together representatives from metropolitan, rural, and regional NSW and a range of expert clinical representatives including nursing, medical, allied health, Aboriginal health, hospital executive and NSW Ambulance. The priority of the Taskforce will be to enhance state-wide collaboration, provide cohesive leadership and to identify improvements for EDs in NSW.

We are both committed, along with the members of the Taskforce, to look at opportunities to streamline and deliver treatment in more strategic ways. We want to generate new ideas and solutions to support healthcare workers in our busy EDs to provide the best possible care to our patients.

Already we have made progress. Happily, we have a huge advantage in our people and the work they do. The Taskforce at its first meeting had the pleasure of endorsing the work of the Emergency Care Assessment and Treatment (ECAT) program. Through standardising nurse-initiated protocols, consistent care can be provided to our patients in NSW public hospital EDs to safely reduce the time a patient waits for treatment, improve the standard of care and reduce the patient's length of stay in the ED.

We are excited for the year ahead and to be part of an inspiring change for the better. We look forward to sharing the many opportunities the Taskforce will generate.

Kind Regards,

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