



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW HOSPITALS TOP HAND HYGIENE RESULTS

The NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, visited Royal Prince Alfred Hospital this morning to inspect one of NSW's highest performing wards in the latest hand hygiene results, released today.

Across NSW public hospitals, the hand hygiene compliance rate has improved by 14 per cent - up from 61.8 per cent April 2010 to 75.9 per cent in October 2011. This is above the national average of 72.6 per cent.

Mrs Skinner said that hand hygiene is the single most effective action for preventing hospital associated infections.

"It's promising to see the improvement in hospitals throughout the state, and I'm proud that NSW has 15 hospitals in the top 20," Mrs Skinner said.

"The ward I visited today is a great example of nurses, doctors, allied health and all ward staff taking charge, and placing a greater importance on hand washing through education and promotion campaigns," she said.

"There is more to do, but nurses in particular have been leading the charge with significant improvement in hand hygiene compliance."

In NSW, hand hygiene rates are monitored closely by the Clinical Excellence Commission throughout the 194 public healthcare facilities who participated in the latest compliance audit.

Mrs Skinner was joined by the Chief Executive of the Clinical Excellence Commission, Professor Cliff Hughes, who explained that this data is used to give individuals wards a better understanding of how they are tracking in comparison to their peers.

"We have already seen major improvements in hand hygiene compliance in NSW, particularly by doctors. NSW is a national leader in hand hygiene with compliance levels of 75.9 per cent," Professor Hughes said.

"The Clinical Excellence Commission is committed to working with all hospitals in NSW to drive improvement in hand hygiene," he said