



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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LABOR MISLEADS ON EMERGENCY DATA

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, today praised hardworking NSW public hospital staff after the independent Bureau of Health Information said that the longest emergency department waiting times had been reduced.

Bureau of Health Information Acting Chief Executive Kim Browne said, "From January to March 2012 we saw an increase in patients at emergency departments but the time they waited for treatment to start was shorter or the same as a year ago."

Mrs Skinner said that it was disappointing the Opposition had chosen to mislead the public and failed to acknowledge the hard work that hospital staff were doing to reduce waiting times.

Misleading claims:

1. *Labor claimed " ... just 59 per cent of patients being treated and discharged or transferred in the recommended four hour time frame – down a whopping 12 per cent on the same time last year."*

This is false. Page 1 of the BHI's report states the data for Jan-Mar 2011 is 59 per cent, meaning that the number is unchanged over the past 12 months. Labor is relying on an out-dated report which uses a different methodology that has since been changed to bring NSW into line with national reporting guidelines. The technical supplement to the report states:

"Times for leaving the ED in previous reports cannot be compared to times for leaving the ED from *Hospital Quarterly, January to March 2012 onwards.*"

2. *Labor stated that, "Off stretcher waiting times have also continued to increase, with just 69 per cent of patients being transferred from the ambulance to the Emergency Department in the recommended 30 minute time frame..."*

This is false. There is actually a 3% improvement on the 66 per cent seen in Jan-Mar 2011 under a Labor government.

3. *Labor claimed that 5 per cent of triage cat 4 (e.g., sprained ankle) patients waited 167 minutes or more for treatment.*

This is misleading. There has been an 18 minute improvement on the 185 minutes the equivalent patients waited in Jan-Mar 2011 when Labor was in Government.