



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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BUSY NIGHT IN EMERGENCY NOT DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS: MINISTER

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, today hit back at Opposition claims that busy emergency departments can be blamed on underfunding.

Mrs Skinner acknowledged that Wednesday night was an extremely busy one for Liverpool Hospital Emergency Department staff, but said a lack of resources was not responsible for the high number of patient presentations.

“Overnight on Wednesday there were 29 presentations to the Liverpool Hospital ED, compared to an average of six,” Mrs Skinner said.

She said 68 per cent of the people who presented that night were assessed as being in the three most serious triage categories.

“The most serious cases were prioritised, as is appropriate, and this caused some impact for patients requiring less urgent treatment.”

Minister Skinner praised the efforts of ED doctors, nurses and paramedics.

“Across the state, the demand on emergency departments has recently been very high and local clinicians have been innovative in their approach to not only coping with this high activity but ensuring patient safety is maintained and enhanced throughout the busy winter periods.”

Mrs Skinner said Opposition claims of underfunding of emergency departments were “simply wrong”.

She said a number of initiatives had been implemented across NSW to improve patient flow. These include:

- Implementation of a new computer system – the Patient Flow Portal System - that allows staff to assess and plan for the expected availability of beds and staff based on demand, and
- Emergency “fast track” lanes where patients who require less urgent care are assessed and treated quickly in designated areas.

Additional funding has also been provided to Local Health Districts in their 2012-13 budget allocations to cater for ongoing growth in ED and inpatient activity, Mrs Skinner said.

“The NSW Government has pledged an extra \$1 billion to be invested in the NSW health system this year. This investment is part of a record \$18.3 billion health budget.”

South Western Sydney Local Health District, which covers Liverpool Hospital, received an allocation of \$1.324 billion, an increase of \$77 million on the previous year.

Mrs Skinner said Liverpool Hospital provides services to one of the largest growing cities in Australia.

“To help manage the growing demand, the hospital has recently undergone a \$390 million redevelopment,” she added.

Mrs Skinner said there had also been a dramatic increase in nurse numbers across the state, with 2,500 additional nurses recruited since the O’Farrell Government was elected.