



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW PUBLIC HOSPITALS PERFORM UNDER PRESSURE

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, has praised the work of the state's public hospital staff for ensuring best care for patients during an incredibly busy April to June quarter.

"Despite a seven per cent increase in patients attending emergency departments across the state this quarter, waiting times have not escalated," Mrs Skinner said.

Latest data from the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) shows that while NSW public hospitals saw 34,000 more patients in their emergency departments compared to same quarter last year, the time the average patient waited was on par.

"What we've seen this quarter is an unprecedented pre-winter increase in patients attending emergency departments and a seven per cent increase in ambulance arrivals on the same period last year," Mrs Skinner said.

"NSW public hospitals have seen more than 2.5 million emergency department attendances in the past 12 months. This quarter there has been a 25 per cent spike in the more serious triage two patients (e.g. chest pain, severe burns).

"At what is generally considered a quiet time of year for our public hospitals, they have treated a significant number of patients. I want to pay tribute to our state's doctors, nurses and hospital staff who have worked incredibly hard under pressure.

"Of the 200,000 surgeries done this year, 92 per cent have been performed within benchmark timeframes."

Mrs Skinner said the increase in emergency department attendances was seen across the most serious triage categories, with a decrease in less urgent cases.

"Several hospitals have continued or recorded much improved performance in emergency department performance within benchmarks compared to 2011. These include Concord, Fairfield, Prince of Wales, Nepean, Tweed, Orange and Bega.

"The hard work of our state's doctors, nurses and hospital staff has ensured best patient care at a busy time."

Mrs Skinner said some hospitals across the state have shone when it comes to on-time performance within benchmarks for elective surgery compared to the same period last year.

Across the system patients booked for surgery have had their operations within times considered appropriate for the urgency of their condition as determined by their treating doctors and against standards set at a national level.

“And some hospitals, including Mount Druitt, Shellharbour, Broken Hill and Tumut, have made significant improvements in performing surgery on time.

“I congratulate staff at busy emergency departments across the state for maintaining their high standards of performance over the past 12 months,” Mrs Skinner said.