



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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STRONG HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE IN BUSY WINTER QUARTER

NSW hospitals faced unprecedented demand in the winter quarter, the latest Bureau of Health Information (BHI) Hospital Quarterly report has found.

Health Minister Jillian Skinner said the report shows 648,668 people presented to NSW hospital emergency departments from July to September 2015 - 21,746 (or three per cent) more than the same time last year. Hospital presentations increased largely due to a severe influenza season, the peak of which surpassed the highest levels of flu reported during the 2009 pandemic.

“Emergency presentations have increased by 25 per cent over the past five years. In this last quarter, 28 hospitals across the state experienced an increase of more than five per cent,” Mrs Skinner said.

“On average, 1,600 more patients are arriving in emergency departments every week, compared to the same period of time in 2014.

“Despite increased demand, our hospitals continue to perform at a high standard, with 70 per cent of patients leaving emergency departments within four hours - one per cent down since the same quarter last year.”

Demand stemmed from more serious cases presenting to emergency departments: 5,251 (or seven per cent) more patients needed emergency category treatment and 12,887 (or six per cent) more patients required urgent category treatment.

There were 5,020 (or three per cent) more hospital admissions from emergency departments and a total 474,568 people were admitted to NSW hospitals - an increase of one per cent - the highest level ever reported by the BHI.

Mrs Skinner praised hospital staff and paramedics for their commitment to driving enhancements in emergency departments.

“NSW Ambulance’s ‘Is Your Urgency an Emergency?’ winter campaign educated the public about when is the right time to call an ambulance. It’s this type of initiative that helped contribute to a three per cent reduction in the number of ambulance arrivals at hospitals,” Mrs Skinner said.

“A Peak Activity Team was also implemented to work with paramedics and hospitals to improve patient flow and access during surges of peak activity.”

Eighty two per cent of patients arriving by ambulance had their care transferred from

paramedics to hospital staff within 30 minutes - a two per cent increase since the same quarter last year.

The BHI data also highlights stability in elective surgery performance: almost all urgent and semi-urgent elective surgery and 95 per cent of non-urgent surgery were performed on time.

“The proportion of patients who received elective surgery within the clinically-recommended timeframes is 97 per cent, a standard we have now maintained for more than 12 months,” Mrs Skinner said.

Emergency department performance		
	July-Sept 2010	July-Sept 2015
Triage category 5: Non-urgent	Median time to start treatment: 29 minutes	Median time to start treatment: 25 minutes
Triage category 4: Semi-urgent	Median time to start treatment: 35 minutes	Median time to start treatment: 29 minutes
Triage category 3: Urgent	Median time to start treatment: 24 minutes	Median time to start treatment: 22 minutes
Triage category 2: Emergency	Median time to start treatment: 8 minutes	Median time to start treatment: 9 minutes
Patients leaving the emergency department in four hours	58 per cent	70 per cent

Elective surgery performance		
	July-Sept 2010	July-Sept 2015
Urgent	92 per cent on time	100 per cent on time
Semi-urgent	90 per cent on time	97 per cent on time
Non-urgent	90 per cent on time	95 per cent on time

For further information: Visit the Bureau of Health Information website at: http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/publications/hospital_quarterly_nsw