

MEDIA RELEASE

New reporting methods improve comparisons between hospitals

An extensive review has seen the Bureau of Health Information change how it reports emergency department (ED) information to promote fairer comparisons between hospitals and better reflect patients' journeys through EDs.

Bureau Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson said the latest edition of *Hospital Quarterly* shows the times 50% and 95% of patients begin treatment within, from July to September 2011. The report also shows the time from presentation to admission for 50% and 95% of ED patients.

"Since reviewing our reporting methods, the Bureau is using data from new information systems to start the clock when people present at an ED rather than when they are triaged," Dr Watson said.

"We are also now reporting on treatment and admission times for 50% and 95% of ED patients and profiling these times over five years.

"These changes offer more information, support fairer comparisons between hospitals and more closely reflect how patients understand their journeys."

ED presentation to start of treatment - July to September 2011:

- 50% of triage 2 patients began treatment within 8 minutes and 95% within 42 minutes
- 50% of triage 3 patients began treatment within 25 minutes and 95% within 143 minutes
- 50% of triage 4 patients began treatment within 36 minutes and 95% within 194 minutes
- 50% of triage 5 patients begin treatment within 34 minutes and 95% within 198 minutes.

"Of those ED patients who are admitted 50% left the ED within 7 hours and 95% within 22 hours," Dr Watson said.

"In this latest report, we're also publishing trends for our new time measures over the past five years so people can identify areas to improve and assess whether any improvements have been sustained.

"By providing information for five years we see that hospitals such as Ryde have, over time, reduced the time spent in EDs for admitted patients, while EDs such as Manning Base show gradual increases in the time it takes to admit ED patients."

During the quarter there were 132,452 arrivals at NSW EDs by ambulance which is a 5% increase since a year ago. The report shows 61% of patients arriving by ambulance were transferred into the care of ED staff within 30 minutes. This compares with 65% in the previous quarter and 64% a year ago.

From July to September there were 55,400 elective surgery procedures. This is 6% higher than the previous quarter and 1% more than a year ago. The median wait time for non-urgent surgery was 212 days, nine days more than a year ago. At the same time, the median waits for urgent and semi-urgent surgery were stable.

SPOKESPERSON: Dr Diane Watson Chief Executive, Bureau of Health Information
MEDIA CONTACT: Sylvia Bell T: +61 2 8644 2105, M: 0419 211 650