

15 June 2022

## STABLE PERFORMANCE FOR SOUTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT DESPITEOMICRON PEAK

Patients in Southern NSW continued to receive high quality care during the peak of the Omicron outbreak from January to March 2022 despite it being another challenging quarter for staff, patients, and the community.

The large number of COVID-19 cases in the community not only presented serious challenges with respect to complex presentations and admissions to Southern NSW Local Health District's (SNSWLHD) health services, but also due to significant staff unavailability as staff contracted or were exposed to the virus, whether in the community or at work.

Chief Executive of SNSWLHD, Margaret Bennett, said the District worked hard to maintain surgical and emergency department services despite these challenges.

"Our teams maintained timely, high quality services even as many staff were furloughed due to COVID-19 infection," Ms Bennett said.

"I want to thank each and every one of our staff members who worked exceptionally hard to achieve these results."

SNSWLHD had 26,632 emergency department (ED) attendances across the District over the January to March 2022 quarter.

Almost eight in 10 patients (79.4 per cent) started treatment on time in the latest quarter, higher than the state average of 70.5 per cent.

Almost eight in 10 patients (76.8 per cent) left the emergency department within four hours, higher than the state average of 62.3 per cent.

Further, almost nine in 10 patients (87.6 per cent) were transferred from paramedics to the ED staff within the 30-minute benchmark, which is above the state average of 78.6 per cent.

In response to the Omicron outbreak, non-urgent elective surgery requiring an overnight stay was suspended from 10 January 2022 in public hospitals across NSW, including those in SNSWLHD, and resumed in a staged manner in February.

Despite this necessary pause, 1,116 elective surgeries were performed across the District during the quarter. Almost all urgent elective surgeries (97.1 per cent) were performed on time.

“While we continued to perform almost all urgent procedures on time, I understand how upsetting it can be having a surgery delayed. Our District remains committed to ensuring those procedures that were delayed due to the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic are performed as quickly as possible,” Ms Bennett said.

Any patients who feel their condition has deteriorated while waiting for their procedure are encouraged to contact their treating doctor for a clinical review and they can be placed in a higher urgency category if required.

In 2020-21 the NSW Government provided an extra \$458.5 million to fast-track elective surgeries and \$80 million was provided as part of the 2021-22 NSW Budget.”

“The NSW Government has committed more than \$4 billion to the NSW health system to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020.

Between mid-2012 and mid-2021, SNSWLHD increased its workforce by an additional 575 full-time equivalent staff - an increase of 32.5 per cent including 29 more doctors, 242 more nurses and midwives and 71 more allied health staff. The District is also set to get a major workforce boost as part of the 2022-23 Budget.

A record 10,148 full-time equivalent staff will be recruited to hospitals and health services across NSW over four years, as part of the NSW Government’s 2022-23 Budget. The \$4.5 billion investment includes a \$1.76 billion boost for NSW Ambulance to recruit 2,128 new staff and open 30 more stations.

## INDIVIDUAL HOSPITAL RESULTS

At **Batemans Bay District Hospital** there were 3,068 attendances between January and March 2022. Nearly all patients (92.1 per cent) were transferred from paramedics to the ED staff within the 30-minute benchmark – in line with the average for comparable hospitals in NSW (92 per cent). Batemans Bay District Hospital performed 106 elective surgery procedures during the quarter. All elective surgeries performed during this quarter were in the non-urgent category and all had their surgery on time from January to March 2022.

At **Moruya District Hospital** there were 2,670 emergency department attendances during the January to March quarter. More than eight in 10 patients (84.6 per cent) were transferred from paramedics to the ED staff within the 30-minute benchmark. Moruya District Hospital performed 194 elective surgeries during the quarter. All elective surgeries across all triage categories (100 per cent) were performed on time.

At **Goulburn Base Hospital** there were 4,630 emergency department attendances during the quarter. During the January to March quarter, 285 elective surgeries were performed. Almost all urgent elective surgery (98 per cent) was performed on time.

At **Cooma Hospital** there were 2,570 emergency department attendances during the quarter. Nearly nine in 10 patients (87.6 per cent) started treatment on time, higher than the average for hospitals of a similar size (80.2 per cent). Almost all patients (98.9 per

cent) were transferred from ambulance to emergency department staff within the 30-minute benchmark, which is higher the average for hospitals of a similar size (92 per cent). The majority of patients (82.1 per cent) left the ED within four hours, in line with the average for comparable hospitals in NSW (81 per cent). There were 75 elective surgery procedures performed during the January to March 2022 quarter.

At **Queanbeyan Hospital** there were 5,840 emergency department attendances during the January to March quarter. Almost nine out of 10 patients (89.6 per cent) started treatment on time, which is above the average for hospitals of a similar size (80.2 per cent). A total of 88.2 per cent of patients left the ED within four hours – higher than the average for comparable hospitals in NSW (81 per cent). Nearly all patients (96.9 per cent) were transferred from ambulance to emergency department staff within the 30-minute benchmark, also above the average for hospitals of a similar size (92 per cent). The hospital performed 176 elective surgery procedures during the quarter.

At **South East Regional Hospital (SERH)** there were 5,332 emergency department attendances during the January to March 2022 quarter. The majority of patients (74.8 per cent) started treatment on time, above the average for hospitals of a similar size (70.3 per cent). More than eight in 10 patients (87.4 per cent) were transferred from ambulance to emergency department staff within the 30-minute benchmark, which is higher than the average for hospitals of a similar size (85 per cent). There were 280 elective surgeries performed during the quarter. All urgent elective procedures (100 per cent) were performed on time.