

## HOSPITAL SCORECARD SHOWS HUNTER NEW ENGLAND HEALTH STAFF RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Public hospitals in the Hunter New England region continued to deliver high quality care despite the significant challenges presented by both flu and COVID-19 in the April to June 2022 quarter.

The latest Bureau of Health Information (BHI) Healthcare Quarterly report captures another busy period for Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD), as the flu season reached its peak and the Omicron outbreak continued to drive high COVID-19 case numbers.

HNELHD Chief Executive Michael DiRienzo said the second quarter of 2022 not only presented serious challenges with respect to complex presentations and admissions to hospitals, but also due to significant staff unavailability as staff contracted or were exposed to respiratory illnesses.

“This period saw many staff furloughed due to winter illnesses or caring responsibilities, which placed extra pressure on our facilities during an already a busy time,” Mr DiRienzo said.

“I appreciate it’s been a challenging couple of months for our staff and thank them for their continued hard work as they provide quality and compassionate care for the communities across our District.

“Pleasingly, our facilities have performed above average across several categories including time to start treatment, surgeries performed on time and transfer of care.”

In the April to June 2022 quarter, there were 116,029 attendances at HNELHD emergency departments, with the majority of patients (64.9 per cent) starting treatment on time.

Almost eight in 10 patients (79.2 per cent) were transferred from ambulance to hospital staff within the 30-minute benchmark – also better than the NSW average (72.5 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 and resumed in a staged manner in February.

HNELHD is working hard to reduce elective surgery wait times, which have been impacted by these necessary pauses. Throughout the second quarter of 2022, the District performed 6,837 elective surgeries, with almost all urgent elective surgeries (99.9 per cent) performed on time.

**HUNTER NEW ENGLAND LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT**

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“Our District remains committed to performing those procedures that were delayed as soon as possible and I want to thank the community for their patience during this challenging time,” Mr DiRienzo said.

“Patients who feel their condition may have deteriorated while awaiting surgery should contact their treating doctor for a clinical review, as they can be placed in a higher urgency category if required.”

Between mid-2012 and mid-2022, Hunter New England Local Health District increased its workforce by an additional 1,956 full time equivalent staff - an increase of 18.6 per cent, including 482 more doctors, 1,042 more nurses and midwives, and 187 more allied health staff.

The NSW Government is investing a record \$33 billion in health as part of the 2022-23 NSW 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 a \$4.5 billion investment. The NSW Budget also includes \$408 million over two years to fast-track elective surgeries and \$899 million for the ongoing COVID-19 response.