

## HUNTER NEW ENGLAND HEALTH PERFORMS IN BUSY WINTER PERIOD

The latest Bureau of Health Information *Healthcare Quarterly* report (July – September 2022) captures a challenging period for Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD), as winter illnesses and ongoing furloughing of staff continued to place pressure on the health system.

Michael DiRienzo, Chief Executive of HNELHD thanked staff for their exceptional work throughout the busy quarter which saw 109,361 attendances however, figures reveal more than half of those presenting to our emergency departments were not in need of life-threatening or critical care.

“We aim to see everyone who comes to our EDs as quickly as possible, but the most seriously unwell patients are always treated first and those with less urgent conditions may face a wait, especially when we’re busy,” Mr DiRienzo said.

“Despite the high demand and the challenges of furloughed staff, the majority of patients (65.5 per cent) in the reporting period started their treatment on time, which is in line with the state average.”

The District also performed above the state on transfer-of-care, with almost eight in 10 patients (78.3 per cent) transferred from ambulance to ED staff within the 30-minute benchmark, compared with the NSW average of 74.8 per cent.

We thank the community for their patience and apologise to those that have waited longer than usual in the ED during this period of high activity.

We also continue to remind everyone to support us by saving emergency departments and ambulances for saving lives. If an illness or injury is not serious or life-threatening, we encourage people to call Healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222, for a 24-hour telephone health advice.

A total of 6,497 elective surgeries were performed across the region, with almost all urgent elective surgeries (99.6 per cent) performed on time.

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 2022-23 budget for Hunter New England Local Health District is over \$2.66 billion, an increase of more than \$103 million, or 4.0% more, on the previous year’s budget.

The NSW Government is investing a record \$33 billion in health as part of the 2022-23 NSW Budget, including almost \$900 million for the ongoing COVID-19 response.

The NSW Government also announced the largest workforce boost in the nation's history in the 2022-23 Budget with a \$4.5 billion investment over four years for 10,148 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to hospitals and health services across NSW.

In addition, the NSW Government is also incentivising hard-to-fill, critical roles in hospitals and health facilities with an \$883 million investment targeted at recruiting and retaining staff in regional, rural and remote areas.