

Question on Notice

No. 981

Asked on 1 September 2021

MR J BLEIJIE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister (a) explain why the Palaszczuk Labor Government has allowed ambulance ramping at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital to climb to a disturbing 52 percent up 19.5 percent compared to 12 months earlier and (b) what measures the Palaszczuk Labor Government plan on implementing to resolve this?

ANSWER

Emergency departments (EDs) across the country are currently experiencing sustained pressure from increases in ED presentations and increased demands on unplanned care.

This can be attributed to several factors including the COVID-19 pandemic and population growth.

I am advised between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service EDs recorded:

- 191,876 presentations, of which 56,736 arrived by ambulance, this represents 7.6 per cent or 13,492 more ED presentations compared to 2019-20. This also included 7.2 per cent more ambulance arrivals (an increase of 3,803 ambulance arrivals);
- an increase in higher acuity patients presenting to EDs – 31,207 category one and two presentations, which is 14.8 per cent more higher acuity patients compared to 2019-20.

The first month of the new financial year (July 2021) saw 15,934 ED presentations, almost a 17 per cent increase on the same month in 2020.

I am further advised as a result of the increased demand and increased ambulance arrivals within these EDs, 60.2 per cent of patients arriving by code one or two ambulances were off stretcher within 30 minutes in 2020-21.

Despite these challenges, in 2020-21, 76.3 per cent of patients were seen within the clinically recommended time upon their arrival to the ED (140,707 patients).

The Palaszczuk Government has invested \$263.7 million through the Care4Qld Strategy to drive critical improvements in the way the health system manages demand.

The Care4QLD Strategy has been developed to respond to the challenges of increased emergency care demand, and aims to improve emergency access and patient flow by strengthening the capacity of our health system to meet the emergency care needs of Queenslanders.

As part of the Care4Qld Strategy, the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service has received \$5 million under Phase 1 for the expansion of Residential Aged Care Support Services and Hospital in the Home Services; implementation of the Transfer Initiative Nurse in Sunshine Coast University Hospital Department of Emergency Medicine; and 27 additional winter medical beds.

In addition to the Phase 1 funding, a further \$17.5 million under Phase 2 of the Care4Qld Strategy has been provided to the Hospital and Health Service to support a new 32 bed general medical ward at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and ED initiatives at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, Nambour General Hospital and Gympie Hospital.