

Question on Notice

No. 1326

Asked on 25 October 2023

MR M HART asked the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and the Minister for Women (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to Queensland Audit Office Report 2: 2021-22 (Measuring emergency department patient wait time)—

Will the Minister advise the five longest stays (in hours) faced by a patient in a short term treatment area within the Emergency Department (such as short stay units, clinical decision units), (reported separately by month from 1 January 2022 and each of Queensland's 26 largest reporting hospitals)?

ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to delivering innovative models of care, to take pressure of our busy emergency departments and improve patient flow. Our \$764 million *Putting Patients First* plan is delivering short stay units and other short-term treatment areas. And we are starting to see promising results.

For example, the seven bed Short Stay Unit at Maryborough Hospital was opened in March 2023. Since then, Emergency Department (ED) performance has improved markedly, with a 50 per cent improvement in the number of people treated within four hours, and a 66 per cent reduction in the number of people spending more than 24 hours in the ED.

In addition, the 16 bed Interim Assessment Unit opened at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in July this year, leading to an almost 33 per cent reduction in the number of patients spending more than 24 hours in the ED.

Further, performance data for the September 2023 quarter, published recently, shows that the median ED wait time is 15 minutes, an improvement of two minutes compared to the same time last year.

It is important to note that a short stay unit is not a temporary ED overflow area nor used to keep patients solely awaiting an inpatient bed nor awaiting treatment in the ED.

In relation to the data requested, I am advised by the department that it is not currently available. Queensland Health continues to examine contemporary ED admission processes, identify opportunities for improvement and standardisation, define metrics to enable optimal quality and efficiency outcomes, and consider how to best publish data so Queenslanders can make the most informed decisions about their healthcare.