

Question on Notice

No. 6

Asked on 13 February 2024

MS R BATES ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to answer to Question on Notice No. 983 of 2022—

Will the Minister advise how many patients were in hospital Emergency Departments for more than 24 hours before being discharged or admitted as an inpatient (reported separately by each hospital and each calendar month) from October 2023 to January 2024?

ANSWER

Any patient presenting to an Emergency Department (ED) will be assessed and appropriately triaged, depending on their condition.

For example, in the last three months of 2023, 100 per cent of the most serious patients were seen immediately. In addition, across this period our EDs saw more than 580,000 patients, and almost 75 per cent of them were seen within clinically recommended timeframes – more than four per cent more than the same time last year.

There are a number of reasons a patient may stay for 24 hours within the ED, including patients with volatile clinical status requiring repeated adjustments to treatment interventions and clinical decision making around ongoing care needs and most appropriate disposition. Patients may also require access to specialist clinicians or equipment, that would not be immediately available outside of the ED. For example, telemetry, negative pressure, isolation or mental health.

When patients are being treated in the ED for more than 24 hours, they are monitored by the clinical staff and the management to identify the reason and to take affirmative action where required. I am also advised that where patients are receiving treatment in EDs, they are in designated treatment spaces.

For example, if a patient is waiting for a medical admission, then an escalation process will occur to help facilitate the movement of the patient.

A patient may stay for 24 hours within the Emergency Department for several reasons. This may include patients with volatile clinical status, requirement for repeat or subsequent investigations, adjustments to treatment interventions and clinical decision making around ongoing care needs. Other factors may include the requirement for a specific type of bed or service to maintain patient safety and the quality of care, for example telemetry, negative pressure or isolation room, or mental health service.

The Miles Government is committed to delivering world class health care for Queenslanders, no matter where they live. That's why we're making investments like the \$764 million *Putting Patients First* plan, tackling the causes of ED pressures across the health system.

There are a number of initiatives within the *Putting Patients First* plan which are specifically related to reducing the number of patients in hospital EDs for more than 24 hours, including:

- more frontline health workers, including employment of specialised ED clinicians to improve support and care for patients waiting for treatment and better coordinate patient flow through the busiest hospitals.
- clinical innovations such as transit lounges, short-stay units and rapid access services to promote emergency department alternatives, reduce patients' lengths of stay and free up beds.
- more beds for the growing population, including major upgrades and expansions to hospitals across the state.

In addition, a further \$20 million has been invested to improve patient flow through hospital EDs, with the following initiatives related to reducing the number of patients waiting in hospital ED's for more than 24 hours:

- expanding Rapid Access Services and Surgical Assessment Units to improve patient flows within EDs;
- increasing access to medical imaging, through extended hours of operation after hours and on weekends; and
- working with general practices, so that they can employ Patient Care Facilitators to keep Queenslanders out of hospital.

Further to this, Queensland Health has invested \$200 million in new funding over the next two financial years to reduce the number of long stay patients in hospitals, further freeing up beds to improve flow from the ED to the ward and allowing more patients to be admitted as an inpatient sooner.

I'm pleased to advise that these initiatives are working, with more than 1,000 fewer patients having spent more than 24 hours in an ED compared to the same time last year.

The list below provides the number of patients that had an ED length of stay greater than 24 hours before being discharged or admitted for the Top 26 facilities in Queensland. This data has been provided for each month between October 2023 to January 2024.

- Cairns – four, six, eight, six respectively of a total 28,983 patients presenting during that period;
- Gladstone – 16, 52, 34, 40 respectively of a total of 12,941 patients presenting during that period;
- Rockhampton – 231, 245, 171, 263 respectively of a total of 17,840 patients presenting during that period;
- Queensland Children's – one, zero, one, one respectively of a total of 23,442 patients presenting during that period;
- Toowoomba – 15, nine, 24, 70 respectively of a total of 22,490 patients presenting during that period;

- Gold Coast University – 60, 52, 72, 131 respectively of a total of 43,112 patients presenting during that period;
- Robina – six, three, 33, 11 respectively of a total of 21,517 patients presenting during that period;
- Mackay – 155, 153, 132, 234 respectively of a total of 18,408 patients presenting during that period;
- Mater Adult – six, 12, 19, 47 respectively of a total of 18,421 patients presenting during that period;
- Caboolture – 93, 107, 55, 44 respectively of a total of 20,572 patients presenting during that period;
- Prince Charles – zero, one, two, zero respectively of a total of 37,699 patients presenting during that period;
- Redcliffe – five, 18, eight, four respectively of a total of 25,108 patients presenting during that period;
- Royal Brisbane & Women's – four, two, four, one respectively of a total of 30,207 patients presenting during that period;
- Logan – 46, 83, 84, 111 respectively of a total of 36,422 patients presenting during that period;
- Princess Alexandra – 29, 61, 31, 19 respectively of a total of 23,333 patients presenting during that period;
- Queen Elizabeth II – five, five, seven, 10 respectively of a total of 21,839 patients presenting during that period;
- Redland – 73, 52, 46, 99 respectively of a total of 19,377 patients presenting during that period;
- Mount Isa – 12, 32, 24, 19 respectively of a total of 10,744 patients presenting during that period;
- Gympie – 20, eight, eight, 22 respectively of a total of 11,919 patients presenting during that period;
- Nambour – two, three, five, two respectively of a total of 12,896 patients presenting during that period;
- Sunshine Coast University – zero, zero, zero, one respectively of a total of 33,082 patients presenting during that period;
- Townsville – four, 12, 10, 33 respectively of a total of 33,019 patients presenting during that period;
- Ipswich – 24, 37, five, 22 respectively of a total of 25,853 patients presenting during that period;
- Bundaberg – 72, 22, 39, 58 respectively of a total of 16,334 patients presenting during that period;
- Hervey Bay – 245, 214, 246, 366 respectively of a total of 15,205 patients presenting during that period;
- Maryborough – eight, 11, 16, 19 respectively of a total of 8,719 patients presenting during that period;

Source: Queensland Health, Emergency Data Collection (EDC), 20/02/2024

Note: Excludes fever clinics.