

Media statement

25 October 2019

Increasing demand for region's emergency departments

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) emergency departments are seeing the largest increase in demand outside Brisbane.

SCHHS Chief Operating Officer Karlyn Chettleburgh said demand in SCHHS emergency departments was higher than any other health service in Queensland, outside of Brisbane.

"Compared to the same time last year, 895 more people presented to our emergency departments in September 2019. Of these, 8516 people were in our sickest categories 1, 2 and 3.

"We saw unprecedented numbers through our EDs this winter when compared to last year with September remaining one of our highest months with very sick patients. We have seen 203 more patients arrive this month via ambulance when compared to the same time last year.

"We prioritise our sickest patients, and 100% of these patients were seen within two minutes (the clinically recommended time). The median waiting time for all emergency patients is just 18 minutes, which is improved performance on the previous month.

Ms Chettleburgh said despite the high volume of emergency presentations, only 30% of patients required hospital admission (9,299 patients did not require admission to hospital).

"This would suggest that for many patients, alternative care settings to our busy emergency departments, could be considered an option. We are working closely with QAS to develop pathways to direct patients to the most clinically appropriate care setting.

"Additionally, later this month we are introducing a new model of care in our emergency department which is redesigning of the flow of patients, improving their journey through the department.

"With this new model of care our patients will be seen sooner."

Ms Chettleburgh said SCHHS was also providing increased access to elective surgery, with 43% more elective surgery provided in September 2019 than the same time last year.

"This means 230 more people than the same time last year, received their elective surgery and emergency surgery numbers are up as well.

"We are actively recruiting for additional specialist Surgeons in ENT, Urology and Plastic Surgery to meet increasing demand.

"Our doctors, nurses and clinicians are devoted to providing timely, safe care and continuously improving time to be seen."

ENDS

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