

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC

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Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19

Minister for Health

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LATEST VICTORIAN HEALTH PERFORMANCE DATA RELEASED

Victoria's health system performance data has been released for the first three months of the year – a period marked by fluctuations in activity caused by the coronavirus pandemic and wide-spread bushfires.

Despite the significant interruptions caused by the pandemic, hospitals and ambulances continued to manage activity well, even as they quickly began preparations to increase capacity ahead of the predicted pandemic peak.

Hospital and ambulance activity initially continued at high levels - including a spike in call-outs and presentations for respiratory symptoms, as bushfire smoke blanketed large parts of the state.

This put Victoria on track to once again break records for high activity, but with the outbreak of coronavirus and strong physical distancing measures put in place to slow the spread of virus, demand has now reduced significantly.

The total number of emergency department presentations for the quarter was 469,488 – 3,400 more than the same quarter last year.

Ambulance Victoria reached 81.8 per cent of cases state-wide within the benchmark 15 minutes, with an average response time of 11 minutes and 39 seconds – well under the 15 minute target. This is despite attending 77,380 Code 1 emergencies in the three months to March, 4,695 more than for the same period a year earlier.

All Category 1 urgent elective surgery patients continued to receive their operations within the target 30 days, with half of them having their procedure within 10 days.

The overall number of people waiting for surgery is expected to rise in the coming months due to the pause on non-urgent procedures, in line with a decision by the National Cabinet. The elective surgery blitz will resume again as soon as it is safe to do so, to help reduce any backlog caused by the pandemic.

Coronavirus will continue to disrupt our health services over the coming months – with the full impact on Victoria's health system expected to become clearer when data for the next quarter is collected and analysed.

The Victorian Government's \$1.9 billion health injection has allowed the state's hospitals to prepare and respond to the coronavirus pandemic - building more bed capacity, securing ICU equipment, staff and space to meet the expected surge in cases, bringing forward new paramedics and boosting access to and distribution of PPE.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"There is no doubt it's been a challenging start to the year for our hospitals and ambulance service – with high demand continuing and coronavirus preparations placing additional pressures on the entire health system."

"We've always been committed to a transparent and open disclosure of how our hospital and ambulance services are tracking – but it will be some months before we can see the true impact the pandemic has had on our health system."

"These are unprecedented times and I thank each and every one of our healthcare workers for their hard-work and continued dedication on the frontline of our pandemic response."

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