

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Friday, 6 August 2021

RECORD DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY HEALTHCARE CONTINUES

Victoria's hard-working doctors, nurses and paramedics are rising to the challenge of record demand with more and more Victorians seeking emergency care throughout the pandemic.

The Victorian Health Services Performance Report for the 2020/21 April-June quarter shows the effects of COVID-19 are still being felt across emergency departments and ambulance services across Victoria.

Ambulance Victoria and our hospital emergency departments experienced their busiest April-June quarter on record. It was the second busiest quarter ever for ambulances and third busiest for emergency departments.

To meet this demand, the Andrews Labor Government is investing \$759 million for more nurses and hospital beds, an expansion of telehealth, more paramedics and ambulances on the road, as well as upgrades to boost capacity and support flow through our busy emergency departments.

This package will deliver 300 more paramedics, triage nurses and support staff for Ambulance Victoria.

In the latest quarter, paramedics responded to an extra 17,535 call outs – with 84,441 calls for the quarter, compared with 68,906 for the same quarter last year – a 26.2 per cent increase. Our hospital emergency departments cared for 479,719 patients in the quarter, an increase of 34.2 per cent from the same period last year.

In addition, there were improvements in the percentage of patients treated within the recommended time across all emergency care treatment categories. The sickest category one patients were all seen immediately.

Victorian hospitals are also performing more elective surgeries and faster with 45,947 patients receiving their surgeries in the quarter – 3.7 per cent more than the previous quarter. The median time to treatment for all elective surgery patients was 31 days – eight days less than the previous quarter.

National Cabinet has recognised all jurisdictions are facing unprecedented demand caused by the pandemic which are creating issues in our health services.

Victoria has now asked National Cabinet to convene a national working group to address issues around funding arrangements, reforms to care models, and workforce fatigue which have all been highlighted by the pandemic.

This will ensure National Cabinet have an accurate picture of the different stresses on the health system, how to fix them and get Australia to a new normal.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

“National Cabinet has recognised all states are experiencing record emergency department presentations with sicker patients, and record ambulance callouts. It must be a national priority to address these critical issues and National Cabinet must commit to fixing them.”

“We are investing more than \$759 million to deliver more paramedics, more beds and new types of triage, to help Victoria recover faster and ensure our community continues to get the care they deserve.”

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