

12 November 2008

## **Patient numbers escalate at Gold Coast emergency departments**

Attendance numbers at both the Gold Coast Hospital and Robina Hospital emergency departments have increased by over 10 per cent compared with the same period last year.

According to the latest Queensland Health Quarterly public hospitals performance report, 17,253 people attended the emergency department at the Gold Coast Hospital compared with 15,386 in the same quarter last year – an increase of 12.1 per cent.

Robina Hospital Emergency Department saw 11,676 patients attend during the September quarter compared with 10,482 people who attended during the same quarter last year – an increase of 11.4 per cent.

And in comparison to the previous quarter (June quarter 2009), the emergency department attendances increased by 9.3 per cent at Gold Coast Hospital and 7.1 per cent at Robina Hospital.

Gold Coast Health Service District Chief Executive Officer, Dr Adrian Nowitzke said the growing attendance figures are further validation of the government's decision to significantly expand the Robina Hospital and build the Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) at Parklands Drive.

"The Queensland Health infrastructure being developed on the Gold Coast is the most significant health investment anywhere in Australia," Dr Nowitzke said.

"Clinical and support staff are working very hard delivering services for our growing community while also making valuable contributions to the planning and development of new services."

The Robina Hospital Expansion will see bed numbers increase to 364 at Robina Hospital by 2011 while the new Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) will have 750 overnight beds when it opens in 2012.

Attendances at the Robina Hospital emergency department have continued to grow since it opened with other services in September 2007.

"The second Gold Coast emergency department has exceeded expectations from the moment it opened," Dr Nowitzke said.

"It treated more than 1100 patients in its first three weeks of operation and now it is seeing over 40 thousand patients annually," Dr Nowitzke said.

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Since it opened, the emergency department has played a key role in helping Gold Coast Health manage the busy winter periods.

Chief Executive Officer Dr Adrian Nowitzke said that the increased capacity being built on the Gold Coast will work in tandem with a range of innovative strategies as the service investigates new ways of improving care delivery.

“We are working closely with our local partners, other care providers, the universities and key stakeholders to ensure we are using the latest evidence-based methods of care delivery to provide the Gold Coast community with the care they deserve,” Dr Nowitzke said.

The community is also being consulted and involved in a range of ways during the development and construction of the new hospitals.

“It is heartening to see that among our peer group hospitals, the Gold Coast is a top performer when it comes to patient satisfaction rates, recording the highest level of 96 per cent.

Over \$1.7 billion dollars is being invested to enhance services and increase bed numbers on the Gold Coast.

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**Definitions:**

***Outpatient services provided*** = the number of outpatient and other non-admitted services **minus** services such as emergency, pharmacy, pathology, diagnostic imaging, community health services, district nursing services and other outreach services.

***People treated as inpatients or emergencies*** = the number of admitted patient episodes **plus** the number of emergency services not resulting in admission. For example, some people will attend the Emergency Department and then be admitted to hospital. These people will only be counted once as inpatients and not counted as emergency patients for this particular figure.

***People admitted to hospital*** = the number of admitted patient episodes of care. For example, one person might be admitted to hospital on two separate occasions, they would then be counted as two episodes of care.

***People treated in emergency departments*** = the number of accident and emergency services provided. For example, a patient attends emergency three times, then it is counted as three separate attendances to the emergency department.

***People received elective surgery*** = the number of people admitted for elective surgery from the elective surgery waiting list in either Category 1, 2 or 3.

***People waiting for elective surgery*** = the number of patients waiting for elective surgery from Category 1, 2 or 3 with a status of ‘waiting’ or ‘booked’.

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