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Victorians report positive experiences in public health services, but there's room for improvement

A new report released today by the Victorian Agency for Health Information reveals that 91% of adult patients rated their overall healthcare experience in a Victorian public health service in 2016 good or very good.

Adult experiences of care in public hospitals – 2016 details the experiences of more than 30,000 Victorians following their stay in a Victorian public health service in 2016.

The results are based on the Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey, a survey completed by a random sample of eligible adults aged 16 or over who were same day or one or more night admitted patients in one of Victoria's 85 public health services.

The report focusses on the findings of 10 key questions that are influential in creating a positive experience for patients, across four key areas:

- **Overall rating of care:** The results from one survey question, 'Overall how would you rate the care you received while you were in hospital?'
- **Aspects of care:** The results from five survey questions that explore important experiences of care.
- **Discharge experience index:** The average result from the responses to four discharge experience questions.
- **Discharge experience:** The results from four questions relating to discharge experience.

These key areas and questions have been informed by years of research with consumers and patient representatives about what is important to patients and what makes for a positive experience in a health service.

Victorian Agency for Health Information CEO, Dr Lance Emerson, said that patient experience information is a fundamental component of providing patient-centred care.

"The inclusion of patient experience measures in the health performance monitoring framework in 2015 was a clear recognition of the vital role that patient experience has in providing the best possible service to the community," he said.

"Understanding patients' experiences during their stay provides useful insights into how a health service is performing.

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“Equipping health services with their patient experience results presents opportunities for them to improve the quality and safety of the care they provide.

“These results act as a benchmark for health services. These are the first year of results following inclusion of patient experience in the *Statement of Priorities* (the agreement between health services and the Government).

“The Victorian Agency for Health Information will continue to monitor and report on the results to share how health services are tracking on these important indicators.”

Safer Care Victoria CEO Professor Euan Wallace said patient experience is one of the most important indicators of health quality and safety – one that health services, clinicians and consumers should pay more attention to.

‘Sharing these results helps health services identify areas where perhaps they could do better. And having the results published for all to see also supports consumers and their families make informed decisions about their care,’ he said.

“We know consumers are often worried about not receiving enough information about their care in a way that they understand, or about not feeling respected or feeling excluded from decisions about their care.

“This report shows the level of care and attention that all Victorians should expect from their hospital and hopefully this supports them to speak up if they have questions or concerns.”

The report contains statewide results, as well as individual results for each of Victoria’s 85 health services.

Access the report at www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/vahi/publications.

About the Victorian Agency for Health Information

The Victorian Agency for Health Information (the Agency) was formally established as an Administrative Office of the Victorian Government on 1 July 2017. The Agency analyses and shares information across our system to ensure everyone has an accurate picture of the performance of health services across Victoria. The Agency’s responsibilities will flow across measurement of patient care and outcomes for three key purposes: public reporting, oversight and clinical improvement.

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Summary of results - statewide

Overall rating of care

- 91% of adult patients rated their overall healthcare experience in a Victorian public health service in 2016 good or very good.

Aspects of care

- 62% reported that they were definitely involved as much as they wanted in care and treatment decisions, a similar result to 2015.
- 57% reported that their worries or fears were definitely discussed with a health professional, unchanged from 2015.
- 55 % reported that their families and carers definitely always had enough opportunity to talk to doctors and nurses, suggesting improvements in this area are needed. This is a similar result to 2015.
- 74% reported that the waiting time from arrival to admission was about right in 2016, unchanged from 2015.
- 65% reported that the bathrooms and toilets were very clean in 2016. This is a slight improvement on 2015.

Discharge experience index

The discharge experience index is derived from four questions that assess patients' discharge experience. A higher percentage indicates more patients had a positive discharge experience.

- Across all respondents to the survey, 75% of patients reported positive experiences of discharge from their health service in 2016, which is consistent with the result in 2015.

Discharge experience

- 70% reported that they received completely sufficient information about managing their health at home, a similar result to 2015.
- 72% reported that their home situation was completely considered when planning for discharge, unchanged from 2015.
- 69% reported that completely adequate arrangements were made for services on discharge, a similar result to 2015.
- 89% reported that their GP was given all the necessary information to support their discharge from a public health service, unchanged from 2015.

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