PRIVATE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS DATA SURVEY

1. BACKGROUND

This report summarises the findings from the 2013 Private Emergency Departments Data Survey. This was a pilot survey, conducted by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) Department of Policy and Research, in conjunction with the ACEM Private Practice Committee. Information was sought from emergency department (ED) directors and managers across a range of areas including workforce, ED activity, available resources and training. Data from eight of Australia’s 23 private EDs was obtained, and as such this data is only indicative and not generalisable.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 The Emergency Departments

- A total of eight EDs responded to the survey, a response rate of 35%.
- The responding EDs were from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

2.2 Emergency Department Staffing

- The private EDs had a median total full time equivalent (FTE) for:
  - Emergency medicine Specialists: 4.6 FTE
  - Other Specialists: 3.0 FTE
  - Senior Medical Officers/ Career Medical Officers: 3.5 FTE
  - Registrars: 3.6 FTE
  - Nursing staff: 23.8 FTE

2.3 Emergency Department Activity

- The EDs experienced a slight decrease in the median number of attendances between the financial years 2011-2012 from 19,405 to 18,710 in 2012-2013, but saw no change in the median admission rate of 39% during the same period.
- Over 90% of attendances to the private EDs were adult patients.
- The majority of attendances were categorised as Australian Triage Scale 3 or 4.
- The responding EDs had a median of 58% of patients discharged or admitted within 4 hours.
- The majority of attendances, 76% were self-referred.
- A median of 22% of patient attendances arrived by ambulance.
- For the three EDs who responded, 2.9% of attendances were uninsured.
2.4 Emergency Department and Hospital Resources

- Of the responding EDs, all had resuscitation and adult emergency/acute beds.
- The majority (75%) also had paediatric emergency/acute and low acuity/sub-acute beds, and an approved procedure room (80%).
- The median number of hospital overnight beds available was 340, with a minimum of 92 and a maximum of 677 being reported.
- The median number of hospital day procedure beds was 27, with a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 106 reported.

2.5 Models of Care

- Half of the responding EDs reported not having any models of care implemented.
- Two EDs reported having either a Fast Track or Short Stay Unit.
- One ED each reported utilising a clinical initiatives nurse, resuscitation team and a sub-acute model of care.

2.6 Education and Training

- Four of six responding EDs (67%) reported having non-emergency medicine (EM) rotations accredited by ACEM, which included ICU, anaesthetics, general medicine, Hospital in the Home, and surgery.
- Five of the six responding EDs reported having university links.