Video transcript:
Access to Emergency Healthcare

Audit question

In this audit we examined the Department of Health (or DH), Ambulance Victoria, and 3 health services to assess whether Victorians are receiving timely and equitable access to emergency healthcare.

We looked at 10 years of data, focusing on 5 government performance measures related to timeliness for all Victorian health services combined.

Background information

When someone presents at an emergency department (or ED), they're assessed by a triage nurse using a 5-point scale from immediately life threatening to less urgent. This determines how quickly they should be seen and treated.

We made 3 key findings.

Key finding 1

First, from 2013–14 to 2022–23, health services did meet the target to immediately see all triage category 1 patients with life-threatening conditions.

However, they did not meet some other key performance targets.

That is:

• transferring patients out of ambulances and into the ED within 40 minutes
• treating all patients within the clinically recommended time
• and meeting targets for the length of patient stays in the ED.

We also noted potential differences against these key performance measures for different population groups.

Key finding 2

Second, DH, Ambulance Victoria and the audited health services understand the key drivers of demand and barriers to timely access to emergency healthcare, and the initiatives we examined address some of these factors.

Key finding 3

Third, DH is improving data collection and monitoring of health services. However, public reporting on how health services are performing against key measures doesn't give insights into long-term trends.

What we recommended

We made 3 recommendations to DH about:

- addressing the reasons health services did not meet performance targets
- investigating potential differences in timely access for some population groups
- and improving its public reporting.

More information

For more information, or to read our full report, go to audit.vic.gov.au.