



# NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## Busiest winter season reinforces call for better ratios

Figures released today by the Bureau of Health Information indicating the highest ever recorded presentations to emergency departments during one quarter, have prompted renewed calls by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) for improved nurse-to-patient ratios.

The July-September quarter saw more than 720,000 patients presenting to hospital emergency departments for treatment, generating massive workloads for nurses, doctors and other hospital staff, as a result of the difficult flu season.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, has paid tribute to the nurses who worked tirelessly in the state's emergency departments and across the public hospital system.

"First and foremost we must acknowledge the efforts of hardworking nurses and other hospital staff who dug deep and were able to manage such a difficult influx of patients presenting to their emergency departments," said Mr Holmes.

"There is no doubt the tough flu season this winter was a contributing factor towards a number of challenges faced by nurses, who went above and beyond to deliver the best possible safe patient care to their communities.

"We know from feedback from our members that many nurses spent the winter period working extremely short staffed, missing meal breaks and working many hours of overtime just to keep up with demand.

"The results out today are yet another reason why the Berejiklian Government needs to seriously improve and expand the current nurse-to-patient ratios within our public hospital system.

"We know ratios save lives. The evidence is also clear that ratios work, when they are implemented correctly and are maintained at their *minimum* standard.

"Unfortunately this year we have seen many instances of the minimum number of nurses to patients deliberately not being rostered, effectively robbing patients of the level of care they should be afforded.

"John Hunter, Royal North Shore and Hornsby are just a few of the hospitals we know have failed to uphold their minimum nurse-to-patient ratios across a number of wards and units in the past year.

"Our members are deeply disappointed and are fed up their calls for better nurse-to-patient ratios continue to be ignored."

Mr Holmes said it was imperative the Berejiklian Government and the NSW Ministry of Health took notice of their nursing and midwifery staff and deliver safe patient care for all of NSW through improved ratios.

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