

Ms Stephanie Hesford
Committee Manager
Legislative Assembly
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Ms Hesford

Inquiry into Auditor-General's Follow-up Reports Out of Hospital Care

As advised in July, I requested further advice from our infection control clinical advisers regarding hospital acquired infections.

NSW Health monitors infections associated with hospital care through eight clinical indicators. As data collected for these indicators do not include information about individual patients, it is not possible to identify particular patients developing an infection while in NSW public hospitals that could have been treated in ambulatory care or hospital in the home type settings.

It should be noted that of the eight clinical indicators seven relate to patients receiving care and treatment that could not be provided in ambulatory or hospital in the home type settings.

The eighth indicator relates to patients, in any ward or unit of the hospital, who develop a *Staphylococcus aureus* bloodstream infection (SA-BSI) during their stay in hospital.

A Hunter New England Area Health Service infectious diseases clinician undertook analysis of records for 104 patients who developed a SA-BSI while in hospital during 2008-09. He found that 91% of patients were not suitable for care and treatment in ambulatory care or hospital in the home type settings.

There were 559 patients reported to have SA-BSI by NSW public hospitals in 2009. Based on this figure, and assuming that 9 per cent of patients acquiring SA-BSI in hospital are able to be cared for in an ambulatory care or hospital in the home setting, 50 patients who acquired a SA-BSI while in NSW public hospitals in 2009 may have been able to have been cared for in ambulatory care or hospital in the home type settings.

I will be providing the Committee with a further update and progress report regarding the Out-of-Hospital services in late September.

Yours sincerely

Dr Tim Smyth
Deputy Director-General
Health System Quality, Performance and Innovation

16 August 2010