

## GENERAL MEDICINE SERVICES

All hospitals in SWSAHS provide a service for patients with medical conditions and general physicians are appointed at all six SWSAHS hospitals.

The advantages of general medical models include improved management of complex multi-system patients, which is very much the trend for admitted patients in public hospitals.

In 2002/03, SWSAHS was 78% self-sufficient in public sector non-subspecialty medicine<sup>1</sup>, providing a total of 3,058 separations and 14,582 beddays, at an average length-of-stay (LOS) of 4.8 days. Most resident outflows were to Westmead, Auburn and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals, and the private sector provided 12% of total demand generated by SWS residents.

There is a small amount of private general medicine provided at Southwest Sydney Private Hospital. The co-located private hospital at Bowral Hospital has a significant work load for general medicine, which is covered by the same physicians as service the public hospital.

At a planned occupancy of 85% and assuming no change in flows, it is projected that adult non-subspecialty medicine services in SWSAHS Hospitals will increase by 26% to 2006 and a further 17% to 2011. Demand by SWS residents for general medicine is forecast to grow by 27% to 2006 and by a further 17% to 2011.

### Current Services

#### Bankstown Hospital

Medical patients are admitted under the subspecialty roster, with Aged Care and Rehabilitation specialists taking patients with illness affecting more than one body system. In 2002/03, there were 805 non-subspecialty medicine separations, including 31% day only, occupying 4,163 beddays at an average LOS of 5.2 days.

#### Fairfield Hospital

Six general physicians serve the patients of Fairfield Hospital and all patients are admitted under the physician of the day. Cardiology, renal and aged care consultative services are available. In 2002/03, there were 540 separations, of which 23% were day only, occupying 2,920 beddays at an average LOS of 5.4 days.

#### Liverpool Hospital

Liverpool Hospital is currently expanding to eight General physicians. General physicians at Liverpool admit a wide variety of patients but the types of patients admitted under this service vary according to availability of sub-specialists. In 2002/03, there were 694 non-subspecialty separations, including 14% day only, occupying 3,721 beddays at an average LOS of 5.4 days.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics from NSW Health label a collection of 29 Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs) as 'non-subspecialty medicine'. These are used in the discussion, although it is recognised that general Physicians and GP VMOs care for patients with DRGs found outside this collection and in the subspecialty groupings discussed in other chapters.

### **Campbelltown and Camden Hospitals**

Seven general physicians are funded for Campbelltown and Camden Hospitals. There is a strong departmental structure in place already. Registrar cover is four general registrars, one for each general medicine team, and a fifth cardiology registrar to work with the cardiology service. There is also an Acute Medical Unit registrar in place. The ward is a forty bed general medical unit, with links to the twenty bed sub-acute general medical ward at Camden Hospital. Physicians cover both Camden and Campbelltown Hospitals.

Precise figures for the number of patients admitted under general medical services are difficult to obtain. All medical admissions are under general physicians with very few exceptions resulting in a large number of admissions. Excluding day only admissions for procedures, there would be in the vicinity of 7,500 general medical admissions to Campbelltown and Camden Hospitals per annum. For non-subspecialty medicine, there were 571 separations in 2002/03, of which 11% were day only, occupying 2,529 beddays at an average LOS of 4.4 days.

The twenty bed sub-acute general medical ward at Camden Hospital is covered by the same general physicians as at Campbelltown Hospital, with support from a CMO during working hours and by the resident staff from the Emergency Department after hours. In 2002/03, there were 310 non-subspecialty medicine separations, of which 49% were day only, occupying 1,091 beddays at an average LOS of 3.5 days.

### **Bowral Hospital**

Two general physicians cover Bowral Hospital and some general medical patients are admitted under the general practitioners, who take the less acute caseload. In 2002/03, there were 138 non-subspecialty separations, of which 79% were day only, occupying 158 beddays at an average LOS of 1.1 days.

### **Non-inpatient**

General medical patients are a large part of the workload of Emergency Departments. General Practitioners provide ongoing support for these patients, who often have chronic conditions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- General Medicine be developed as an Area Service with a Professor of General Medicine appointed as the Area Director, located at Campbelltown Hospital.
- Liverpool and Fairfield Hospital continue to provide General Medicine.
- Bowral Hospital appoint an additional general medicine physician with linkages to Campbelltown Hospital. The continued involvement of general practitioners at Bowral Hospital be encouraged.