

Shorter stays in emergency departments

95% of patients to be admitted, discharged, or transferred from an emergency department within six hours.

LEAD MINISTER

Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health

LEAD AGENCIES

Ministry of Health, Director-General of Health,
Audrey Sonerson

Health New Zealand, Chief Executive,
Dr Dale Bramley

TARGET DELIVERY PERFORMANCE - QUARTER ENDING JUNE 2026

Target	Baseline (September 2023)	Current (March 2026)	Status
95%	68.0%	74.4%	Feasible

PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGET

Proportion of patients to be admitted, discharged, or transferred from an emergency department within six hours



TARGET DELIVERY ACTIONS

The Government is committed to providing timely, high-quality healthcare for all New Zealanders. Results have improved compared with the previous quarter, and compared with the same quarter in the prior year.

Performance is improving despite continued elevated demand. In the quarter ending March 2026, 74.4% of patients who attended an emergency department were admitted, discharged, or transferred within six hours – a slight improvement on the same quarter last year (74.2%). Despite continued elevated demand, doctors and nurses are getting patients seen faster than the same quarter in the previous year.

The Minister of Health is focused on driving action to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to timely high-quality healthcare. Improvements across the whole system of care are needed to reduce the unacceptable wait times at emergency departments.

Initiatives to help improve results for this target include:

- The introduction of ED flow manager roles, a new surgical assessment unit in Dunedin, allied health staff in several EDs across the country and implementing 'fast-track' models of care at the front door in a number of EDs.
- An additional \$25 million announced in March 2026 to prepare the health system for higher demand over the busy winter months. As of 21 June, 82% of the proposed 378 FTE have been recruited to or in place, 84 of a planned 71 additional hospital beds were open, and 81 patients had been successfully discharged from hospital to short stays in aged residential care.
- \$164 million over four years (Budget 2025) for new and improved urgent and after-hours healthcare, which aims for 98% of New Zealanders to live within a one-hour drive of in-person urgent care. New and enhanced urgent care services are being progressively launched across the country. A new urgent and after-hours service opened at Toka Hāpai Selwyn Health Hub on 8 August 2026.
- Funding provided through Budget 2026 will support increased care delivery in 2026/27, including for 26,000 additional events in emergency departments.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Health agencies will report on progress each quarter. National and regional results will be published so New Zealanders will be able to see how their local hospital is performing.

Performance information about the health system is available at the Health New Zealand and Ministry of Health websites www.healthnz.govt.nz and www.health.govt.nz

For more information on the Government Targets go to www.dpmc.govt.nz