

# Four Hour Rule



Jenny Brenton, Dr Shirley Bowen and Dr Mark Monaghan.

## A letter from the desk of the A/Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

On 8 February 2009 Health Minister Dr Kim Hames announced that WA would introduce a **Four Hour Rule Program** as part of plans to streamline and enhance our patients' journey through Fremantle Hospital.

As of today, Fremantle Hospital, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital have commenced implementation of the Four Hour Rule Program.

The Program will involve each one of you and I take this opportunity to thank you in advance for what could be one of the most important innovations in health service provision in WA for many years.

The **Four Hour Rule Program** is a two-year strategy to improve clinical outcomes for our patients. A key element of the program is that performances will be measured and our achievements will be publicly available.

Our targets are :

1. By April 2010, to ensure that 85 percent of Emergency Department (ED) patients are admitted, transferred or discharged within a four hour timeframe.
2. By April 2011, Fremantle Hospital is expected to have 98 percent of ED patients admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours.

**April 2010 aim: 85% of patients through ED in 4 hours**

By comparison, currently Fremantle Hospital averages just 52 percent of ED patients being discharged, admitted to a bed within four hours.

This is a huge task and will not be achieved overnight.

My personal commitment, and that of the Executive team, is to ensure we meet the target while continuing

to provide high quality care in an enjoyable and safe workplace.

The **Four Hour Rule Program** is not simply about announcing a target. It is about improving both the way we work and the patient experience by reducing delays in ED and inpatient areas by streamlining processes for admission and discharge. The Program requires a whole-of-hospital redesign process that involves all staff and focuses firmly on the patient outcome. I believe we can be successful by continuing to work together and by implementing innovative ideas where ever possible.

**Staff forums with Four Hour Rule team**

We have developed a top class Project Team led by Jenny Brenton, Dr Mark Monaghan and Nasreen Al-Saffar. There will be many opportunities for everyone to be involved in the problem solving sessions. Please make sure you take the opportunity to be involved

in these sessions and to "have your say".

**Think about what you do and how it could improve**

I will be making available information on a regular basis. The targets are challenging but I know the culture and spirit of

Fremantle Hospital will enable us to responsibly reach our goals.

Please visit <http://intranet.smahs.health.wa.gov.au/ServicesFacilitiesLocator/FH/fourhr/aboutus.asp?v=0> for further information on the **Four Hour Rule Program**.

I look forward to working with you to achieve our **Four Hour Rule** targets.

**Dr Shirley Bowen, A/Executive Director FHHS**



# Who When How Where What Why OF THE FOUR HOUR RULE

Fremantle Hospital has appointed a clinical lead, a facility co-lead and a project co-lead to make up the Four Hour Rule Program Office. The Program Office lead the Project Team and together are responsible for the implementation of the Four Hour Rule Program at Fremantle Hospital. The three members of the Program Office are:

**Jenny Brenton, Fremantle Facility Co-Lead** – Jenny is Nursing Director for Patient Flow. For the next two years she will play an instrumental role in ensuring the Four Hour Rule implementation is successful. Jenny will provide direct support to Project Teams, ensure regular comprehensive reporting and act as a touch-point for facility staff.

**Dr Mark Monaghan, Fremantle Program Clinical Lead** – Mark is a Consultant working in the Emergency Department. His role is to provide clinical guidance and lead the team in strategy development, risk analysis and stakeholder management.

**Nasreen Al Saffar, Fremantle Project Co-Lead** – Nasreen will train and assist staff in the CSR methodology, management, tools and techniques for the Four Hour Rule.

Also assisting the Project Team are:  
*Jane Hall-Payn, Administrative Assistant, Patient Flow Unit.*  
*Jessica Willet, Public Relations Officer.*



*Jenny Brenton,  
Fremantle Facility Co-Lead*



*Dr Mark Monaghan,  
Fremantle Program  
Clinical Lead*

*"The Four Hour Rule Program is a quality initiative. The important focus is on improving patient care and enhancing the patient journey."*

*"This is the best chance any of us will get to improve patient care at a system level. The outcome will be reduced patient waiting times, reduced overcrowding and better patient outcomes."*

## Who



*Bonnie Tait,  
A/Manager Patient  
Support Services*



*Yvonne Rintoul, Clinical  
Nurse Specialist ED  
Flow Coordinator*



*Judith Tunnicliffe,  
Clinical Nurse  
Specialist ED*



*Michael Jacobson,  
Nursing Director  
Surgical Services*



*Kerry Barton, SMAHS  
Manager, Hospital in  
the Home*



*Lynn Ready, Clinical  
Nurse Manager F6*



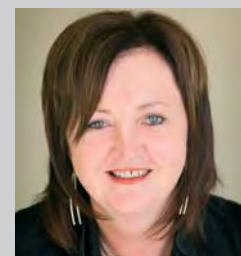
*Greg Scott, Chief MIT  
Radiology*



*Julie Bartley, Chief  
Occupational Therapist*



*Krista Sims,  
Medical Registrar*



*Maureen Wiltshire,  
Nursing Director,  
Mental Health*

## Fremantle Project Team

# Where

- The first phase of the introduction of the Four Hour Rule initiative will be introduced across Fremantle Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital.
- The new program will be implemented in three stages starting with adult tertiary hospitals and Princess Margaret Hospital in the first half of 2009, then at other metropolitan sites, before implementation at regional hospitals.

# How

- The Four Hour Rule Program is based on a similar model used in the United Kingdom that has been successful in delivering benefits to patients and staff. WA Health will be adapting the UK model to suit local conditions and community needs.
- Clinical service redesign will require staff to diagnose and analyse problems and generate solutions that are specific to individual hospital sites.
- The involvement of staff and patients is an integral component of the redesign process and there will be opportunities for staff to work with patients and consumer representatives to redesign processes and to identify new ways to improve the way we manage emergency care.

# What

Introduction of the Four Hour Rule Program follows a visit by WA Health professionals to National Health Service (NHS) hospitals in the United Kingdom.

WA delegates were told that the Four Hour Rule was about providing quality care and enhancing the whole patient journey.

The Program offered staff greater prospects to extend their roles and to access research and teaching opportunities. There were extended roles in medicine, nursing and allied health and these were pivotal to the flow of patients through emergency departments across the NHS.

There was consistent agreement that the target of four hours, at 98% as set by the NHS Emergency Demand project, was an appropriate and sustainable target to ensure long term change.

A collaborative approach was used in the NHS to provide central oversight to the project, using a redesign system that mandated such things as methodology, governance, key positions, timelines, outcomes, targets and reporting requirements.

A recurring theme in the redesign of NHS hospitals was a focus on the patient journey throughout the care process.

Most hospital sites in the UK have modified their approach to nursing triage. It was felt that the previous triage process contributed to queues in the ED and did not add value to the ED patient experience. The triage process has been modified to direct patients to different streams or pathways, such as minor admissions, major admissions, medical admissions and surgical admissions.

The WA Health Four Hour Rule target requires that 98 per cent of patients seen in our emergency departments are admitted, transferred or discharged within a four hour timeframe.

# When

- Each hospital will have two years to redesign processes and implement improvements.
- Other hospitals with emergency departments - Rockingham General Hospital, Armadale Kelmscott Memorial Hospital, Swan Districts Hospital, Bunbury Hospital, Graylands Hospital, and Joondalup Health Campus - will begin in October, 2009.
- Country Regional Resource Centres (including Nickol Bay Hospital), Peel Campus and King Edward Memorial Hospital will begin in April 2010.
- All hospital sites involved in the Program will have to reach the target by mid-2012.

# Why

- We require a fundamental change to the way we manage patients requiring unplanned or emergency care if we are to continue to meet demand.
- The aim of the Program is to improve patients' experiences in the public health system and the quality of care they receive. Part of the plan is to reduce delays in the emergency department and streamline processes across the whole hospital.
- Our emergency departments (EDs) are under significant pressure, with attendances growing by more than seven per cent over the past year - the Four Hour Rule Program will enhance patient care and significantly reduce waiting times.

# Four Hour Rule Program helping improve patient care



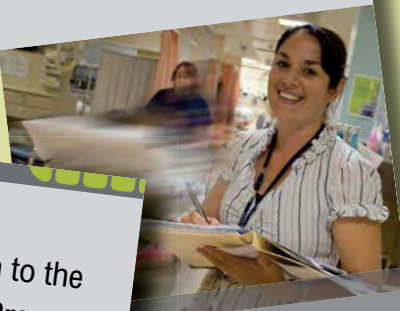
The Four Hour Rule is a WA Health program that will fundamentally change the way we manage unplanned or emergency patient care. The aim of the Program is to improve the quality of patient care by reducing delays in the emergency department and streamlining processes right across the hospital.

For more information visit [www.health.wa.gov.au/fourhourrule](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/fourhourrule)



Government of Western Australia

An introduction to the **Four Hour Rule Program** information for staff



An introduction to the **Four Hour Rule Program** information for patients



WA Health is to undergo a fundamental change to the way we manage patients who require unplanned or emergency care.

WA Health is to undergo a fundamental change to the way we manage patients who require unplanned or emergency care.

- Posters and pamphlets are available to keep staff, patients and visitors informed.

# Four Hour Rule:

Think about these questions:

- How do we ensure that we have space on our wards for the following day's admissions? How do we discharge enough patients before the new admissions arrive?
- How do we reconfigure services in the ED so that patients are seen by an appropriate decision maker, investigated and treated - within four hours?
- How are we going to make the decision to admit at 3am and still meet the target?
- Who is going to provide the leadership at ward level and how will they be empowered to remove obstacles to patients' care?
- How do we make sure that patients are discharged safely on days when consultants are not scheduled to attend the hospital i.e. weekends?
- How do we ensure that we book elective patients in a fashion that avoids unnecessary cancellations?
- How do we reduce bed wastage - beds with no patients for extended time?

## Minister: 'Serious reform'

Health Minister Dr Kim Hames announced the plans for a new system to streamline and enhance emergency patient care at WA's public hospitals after a visit to the UK.

Dr Hames said the program, to be known as the Four Hour Rule, would ensure that the majority of patients arriving at emergency departments (EDs) were admitted, discharged or transferred within a four-hour timeframe.

"WA Health requires a radical change to its management of patients who require unplanned or emergency care," he said.

"The aim of this new program is to improve patient experiences by reducing delays in EDs and inpatient areas by streamlining processes for admission and discharge.

"This is a serious reform of the way our hospitals operate and will take time to get right, but this is not simply about announcing a target.

"This Government is about improving the way we work and the services we provide to patients."

The Minister said the program would trigger the redesign of processes in all hospital services across WA Health.