



Testing made easy at hospital

LEETON District Hospital has introduced a new point-of-care testing program that will give emergency patients faster access to pathology results and improve overall care.

NSW Health Pathology is leading the statewide effort to introduce the managed point-of-care testing (PoCT) scheme in public hospital emergency departments (ED) that don't have access to 24-hour pathology laboratories on-site.

The aim is to provide ED teams, particularly in regional and rural areas, with access to on-the-spot results for certain types of pathology tests to deliver more timely care.

The Murrumbidgee Local

Health District is the latest to adopt the program and is working with Pathology West to introduce 43 devices across 27 emergency departments by the end of April.

Leeton hospital last week introduced one new device and will network an existing device to support patient care.

Leeton Health Service manager Greg Brennan said until recently the hospital had to send some pathology samples off-site for analysis.

"By having reliable point-of-care devices within the ED, we can get faster results for certain pathology tests, which means we can make quicker clinical decisions and improve time to

treatment," Mr Brennan said.

"We can also save travel time for some patients and that's something they really appreciate."

The hand-held PoCT devices provide on-site analysis for some of the most common pathology tests emergency department teams rely on.

Acting director for Pathology West Doctor Michael Whitley said PoCT contributed to better health care.

"PoCT will never replace the fully-fledged pathology laboratory," he said. "However, technology has advanced to a stage we can now bring some parts of the pathology laboratory to the patient."