



## Pathology Point of Care Testing now at Braidwood MPS

Braidwood Multi-Purpose Service has introduced a state-of-the-art point of care testing program that will give ED patients faster access to pathology results and improve overall care.

NSW Health Pathology is leading the state-wide effort to introduce the managed point of care testing (PoCT) scheme in public hospital emergency departments 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 so they can deliver more timely care for patients.

The Southern Local Health District is the latest to adopt the program and is working with Pathology West (one of five NSW Health Pathology Networks) to introduce 14 devices across 11 emergency departments by the middle of May 2014.

Braidwood Multi-Purpose Service will introduce two new devices tomorrow to support patient care.

The hand-held PoCT devices provide on-site analysis for blood gases, lactate, haemoglobin, troponin, chemistries and electrolytes and INR/PT – some of the most common pathology tests emergency department teams rely on.

Braidwood Multi-Purpose Service Nurse Manager Robert Richardson said that until recently pathology samples had to be sent 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 Richardson said.

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

Dr Michael Whiley, Acting Director for Pathology West (the NSW Health Pathology network that services the Southern LHD) said point of care testing contributes to better health care by significantly reducing turnaround time for some types of pathology tests.

“Point of care testing will never replace the full-fledged pathology laboratory which will continue to perform more detailed analysis and more technically advanced tests,” he explained.

“However, technology has advanced to a stage that we can now bring some parts of the pathology laboratory to the patient.”

Dr Whiley said clinical teams will be able to have confidence in the new PoCT results, as the hand-held devices will be managed to the same quality systems as traditional laboratory instruments.

The state-wide PoCT pathology rollout has been funded through a \$5million grant from the COAG's National Partnerships Agreement Emergency Department capital program.

In addition to providing PoCT devices for small EDs, the program also includes:

- \* training for ED staff to ensure the devices are used properly,

- \* technical support and ongoing monitoring for devices, and

- \* software that will enable results to be electronically transmitted to pathology laboratory information systems and ultimately to a patient's electronic medical records.

NSW Health Pathology aims to provide new devices to roughly 150 emergency departments by June 2014 and integrate existing devices already used in another 110 EDs into the managed PoCT service.

Dr Max Alexander, Chief Executive for Southern Local Health District, said the managed PoCT strategy will increase reliability, consistency and accuracy of tests across the district.

“It's a great opportunity to use technology to support better healthcare across our rural and regional communities, and we're excited to be working with NSW Health Pathology and Pathology West support better care for patients in our region,” Dr Alexander said.



• The Pathology Testing Unit.



• Co-ordinators for point of care testing Doug Rashleigh and Dorra Arvanitis, with RN Steve Lidman, and Dr Sangsari.