



On-the-spot blood results

Yass District Hospital has introduced a state-of-the-art testing program that will give emergency patients faster access to pathology results.

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 hand-held 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.

Yass Hospital spokesman Warren Rivett said that until now Yass had been using devices that produced results in hardcopy printouts that were then entered manually into a patient record.

"Having this new point of care device within the

ED means results are available in real time electronically so we have the most up-to-date information on the status of the patient," Mr Rivett said.

"It's always safest when the patient's details are in one consolidated record. We can make quicker clinical decisions and improve time to treatment.

"It also means our nursing staff is saving time in record keeping and can direct more of their efforts into patient care."

Dr Michael Whiley, Acting Director for Pathology West (the NSW Health Pathology network that services the Southern LHD) said point-of-care testing significantly reduced 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."



• Dorra Arvanitis, Mary Smeaton, Warren Rivett, Nicola Barnes and Doug Rashleigh with the new pathology results devices.