



New devices boost emergency

By Caitlin Andrews

FAST diagnosis and personal information security are just two of the pros of new technology devices introduced to the Scott Memorial Hospital Scone emergency department recently.

The point of care testing devices allow people to learn straight away if they are at risk of a heart attack or if a trip to another larger hospital is necessary or not.

Data is transferred immediately to a lab and results returned directly to the nurses at the hospital.

The program gives patients faster access to reliable pathology results while also creating one electronic patient record, which is safer for patient privacy.

The two devices have been implemented in Murrurundi and Merriwa hospitals as well, as part of a state-wide roll out from Broken Hill in the west to Pambula in the south.

Thirty-one devices have been introduced in 28 hospitals in the Hunter New England Health

region.

Initiated by NSW Health Pathology, the program is targeted at rural and regional emergency departments that don't have access to 24 hour pathology laboratories to allow on-the-spot results for certain types of pathology tests.

Being hand held with a recharging and communication docking station, the device provides analysis for blood gases, lactate, haemoglobin, troponin, chemistries and electrolytes, and INR/PT blood coagulation tests.

The devices are already saving lives and have just been named a finalist in the NSW Health Awards to be announced next Friday.

Scott Memorial Hospital health service manager Judy Bernasconi said by having reliable point of care devices within the emergency department they can get faster results for certain pathology tests.

"This means we can make quicker clinical decisions and improve time to treatment," Ms Bernasconi said.

"We can also save travel time

for some patients, and that's something they really

appreciate."

NSW Pathology North director Dr Stephen Braye said the devices reduce turnaround time and allow health professionals to bring parts of the laboratory to the patient.

"Clinical teams will be able to have confidence in the point of care testing results as the hand held devices will be managed to the same quality standards as other NSW Health Pathology laboratory instruments."



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QUICKER RESULTS: Scott Memorial Hospital emergency department registered nurse Suzanne Pollard, NSW Health Pathology project manager Andrew Sargeant with Scott Memorial Hospital emergency department acting nurse unit manager Chrissy Haddrill testing the device on Peta Cooper.