



**PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING
ACT DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER**

TAKING PRESSURE OFF CANBERRA HOSPITAL'S EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

The Rudd Government today announced \$10 million to establish a 'Walk-in Centre' at The Canberra Hospital, to help take pressure off its busy emergency department.

This funding will mean development of a new Nurse-led Walk-in Centre at The Canberra Hospital will begin in July 2009 and be operational in June 2010.

From June 2010, more minor cases will be able to be treated at the Walk-in Centre – helping to take pressure off the emergency department and allowing staff to concentrate on more serious and life-threatening cases.

The Canberra Hospital's emergency department sees approximately 53,000 patients a year – approximately 40 per cent of them with minor ailments such as coughs and colds, minor cuts and wounds, and muscle strains and sprains.

The new clinic will be operational 16 hours per day, seven days a week. It is estimated that it will provide up to 30,000 services annually.

The Canberra Hospital Walk-in Centre will be staffed by highly skilled Nurse Practitioners, complementing reforms in the 2009-10 Budget to provide MBS and PBS access for this group.

The Rudd Government believes access to public hospital services should be on the basis of clinical need and is committed to improving the function of our public hospital emergency departments. In 2006-07, 93.7 per cent of emergency presentations were treated in public hospitals.

Today's investment is funded from the \$750 million committed at COAG last year to take pressure to take pressure off our emergency departments.

This commitment carries a performance benchmark of 80 per cent of emergency department presentations to be seen within clinically recommended triage times as recommended by the Australian College of Emergency Medicine by 2012-13.

Emergency department funding was part of the 2009-10 Budget's record \$64 billion boost to funding for the nation's public health and hospital system – an increase of more than \$22 billion, or 50 per cent, over the last Australian Healthcare Agreements under the previous Government.

The Government is committed to maintaining the balance of public and private in our health system – and this means supporting the critical role of the public hospital emergency departments in our health system.

CANBERRA

25 MAY 2009

PRESS OFFICE (02) 6277 7744

MINISTER ROXON'S OFFICE (02) 6277 7220

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER'S MEDIA - Kathryn Roberts 0402 399 907