



Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

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One nation: are all Australian States and Territories equal?



A new report from the Grattan Institute has found that the performance of state health systems is highly variable. A key measure, avoidable mortality rates – defined as deaths from conditions that are potentially preventable and/or treatable through existing primary or hospital care²⁹⁸ – varies significantly between states and within states.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the report found that service delivery is just as variable. Public hospital treatment in the most efficient state (Victoria) is one-third cheaper per admission – after taking into account the complexity of

the patient's condition and treatment – than in the most expensive state (SA).²⁹⁹ Patients in Victoria wait almost a month (24 days) less for an elective procedure than patients in NSW.

The Report makes the following recommendations:

- State governments should develop community-based prevention programs to reduce the disparity in avoidable mortality rates between urban and rural Australians.
- State governments should develop telehealth strategies to improve access to specialist services and work closely with Primary Health Networks to strengthen primary care services in rural areas.
- State governments should use their funding policies to put more pressure on public hospitals to become more efficient, including by improving the safety of patient care.
- State governments should strengthen hospital accountability to reduce combined outpatient and inpatient waiting times.
- States should publish consistent dental and outpatient waiting time data.
- State governments should agree on an improved set of performance indicators to measure the adequacy of public mental health services

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