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High quality private hospital care valued - new data

Private hospital admissions continue to rise, confirming Australians have confidence in the high quality care they receive in the private system says Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) CEO Michael Roff.

Commenting on the release of the latest Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) data on private health insurance, Mr Roff said it was pleasing to see the numbers of episodes of care continue to grow.

APRA data shows episodes of care in the private hospital sector increased by 2.6 percent for the quarter.

There was other good news in the data, he said.

“It is encouraging to see private health insurance participation increase by 15,000 this quarter, although there was a slight decline over the year.

“A concern for the industry is that 57.2 percent of private health insurance policies exclude certain services. The risk is that Australians will find themselves in need of a procedure that their policy does not cover them for and will be unable to access the high quality private hospital care they are relying on.

“Australians should check their policy regularly to ensure it is still fit for purpose,” Mr Roff said.

While privately insured patients treated in public hospitals is not increasing, it remains an issue for Australians.

“There are still way too many privately insured patients treated in the public system. This is putting pressure on elective surgery waiting times in the public sector and means Australians who need the public system are left waiting for care.” He said.

Mr Roff said the private hospital industry is working with Government on the next round of reforms to improve the value of private health insurance to Australians.

“Rather than sniping from the sidelines as some commentators choose to do, as an industry we are actively working with government to implement solutions that will make a difference to Australians,” he said.

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The Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) is the peak industry body representing the private hospital and day surgery sector. The private hospital sector treats 3.69 million patients a year, including treatment of more than a third of chemotherapy, 60 percent of all surgery, 74 percent of all elective musculoskeletal surgery and 79 percent of rehabilitation.