



PRESS RELEASE

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GHA copes well with higher than normal winter demand for health services

HM Government of Gibraltar feels it necessary to clarify the circumstances at St Bernard's Hospital.

St Bernard's Hospital experienced a surge in admissions in December that was greater than is normal for this time of year. However, although larger than usual numbers of patients required hospital treatment, the GHA was prepared to meet the seasonal increased demand for hospital services.

It was expected that, as is usual in winter, the Accident and Emergency department at St Bernard's Hospital would experience an increase in attendance by elderly patients. In line with industry best practice, the GHA has been working holistically across the service and together with the Care Agency and with relatives to deliver care packages at home. This forward-planning has meant that over 75% of elderly patients attending A&E were able to go home without requiring hospital admission; this is by far the most beneficial outcome for the patients who are able to receive quality treatment and care in the comfort their own homes.

All patients who required admission into St Bernard's Hospital in December 2016 were admitted and provided with a bed, although some were treated in A&E until they could be moved to a ward. These patients received exactly the same care in their temporary A&E beds as they would normally receive on a ward. Regrettably, three GHA patients receiving treatment at Xanit have been delayed in their immediate repatriation to St Bernard's Hospital due to unavailability of a bed. In each of these three cases the safest and best option was for these patients to temporarily remain at Xanit.

The Government is able to confirm that a major announcement regarding the Dementia Day Care Centre and Residential Facility will be made later this week. There are currently 60 patients receiving long term care at St Bernard's Hospital, some of whom might otherwise be cared for at the new facility. The Opposition, therefore, paint an inaccurate picture of the circumstances at St Bernard's Hospital.

Minister for Health, the Hon Neil F Costa, said: 'The GHA has been working extremely hard over the last few months to plan ahead for the normal winter surge in hospital admissions. This year, however, we experienced an unusually high demand for hospital services and regrettably, a small number of patients remain temporarily at Xanit until we are able to safely and comfortably repatriate them to St Bernard's Hospital. The Government and the



GHA are committed to providing the best possible standard of healthcare provision 24/7, year-round, and I would like to thank all GHA staff for their professionalism and dedication in meeting this winter's increased demand. In many cases this has meant that patients have been able to spend the holidays at home with their families whilst still receiving the highest possible standards and quality of care.'