



# Illinois College of Emergency Physicians

3000 Woodcreek Drive, Suite 200, Downers Grove, IL 60515

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE  ICEP.org

phone: 630.495.6400 toll-free: 888.495.ICEP fax: 630.495.6404

## The Value of Emergency Medicine: Cost-Effective Health Care

The Illinois College of Emergency Physicians is the state medical specialty society representing more than 1,300 emergency physicians across Illinois. As the state chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, ICEP works to support quality emergency care and represent the unique perspective of emergency medicine.

### **Emergency medicine is cost-effective and vitally important as the health care safety net for Illinois citizens:**

- Emergency medicine is an essential community service, one that must remain viable and efficient. Emergency physicians provide care for anyone at any time for any reason. They are dedicated specialists who mobilize resources to diagnose and treat every kind of medical emergency.
- Emergency care represents only 2% of the nation's health care expenditures. Emergency physicians treat nearly 124 million of the sickest patients each year, using just 2 cents out of every health care dollar according to data from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.
- Access to quality emergency medical care must be available when you need it. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 92 percent of emergency visits are from very sick patients who need care within 1 minute to 2 hours.
- The safety net provided by emergency care is threatened by the state budget crisis and potential Medicaid cuts in Illinois.
- Illinois is ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in Medicaid reimbursement rates. Dwindling and delayed Medicaid payments drive many more primary care physicians away from accepting Medicaid patients. With fewer available options, Medicaid patients will increasingly rely on emergency departments for their basic health care needs as well as emergency needs. This limits the capability of emergency departments to serve all patients and results in extended wait times and overcrowding.
- Under the federal EMTALA law, emergency physicians must evaluate and stabilize every patient who seeks care. As a result, unlike other specialties, emergency physicians cannot limit the number of Medicaid patients they see.

**State legislative support is key to maintaining the health care safety net that emergency physicians provide. The state budget crisis and limited resources in Illinois have stretched it to breaking point. Access to care for all Illinois citizens is threatened. Don't let the safety net break.**