

# ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

EXPERT CARE FOR ANYONE, ANYWHERE,  
AT ANY TIME



## Emergency Department Boarding



Emergency physicians are being forced to treat patients in the waiting room itself—where lack of privacy, equipment, and physical space is greatly reducing the quality of care that can be provided.



The American College of Emergency Physicians collected more than 140 personal stories from emergency physicians across the country and *nearly all respondents (97%) cited boarding times of more than 24 hours.*



Boarding happens at EDs around the country and affects patients regardless of condition, age, insurance coverage, income or geography type, but there is a disproportionate impact on minority patients and other underserved populations seeking emergency care.



Such worsening conditions in EDs and hospitals are leading to more emergency physicians and nurses burning out and leaving health care altogether, further exacerbating the boarding crisis and sending the nation's already strained emergency care system further towards collapse.

**Emergency department (ED) patient boarding occurs when a patient continues to occupy an ED bed even after being seen and treated by a physician.**

**Patient boarding is a public health emergency and systemic crisis straining our nation's health care safety net.**

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Ample research supports the conclusion that **ED crowding leads to increased mortality.**

Boarding can also lead to ambulance diversion, increased adverse events, preventable medical errors, lower patient satisfaction, violent episodes in the ED, and higher overall health care costs.



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## ***Fast Facts About Emergency Medicine***

**Access to emergency care is critical and more people rely on emergency physicians than ever before.**

One in three people in the U.S. come to the emergency department, for a total 150 million visits to the emergency department every year.

Emergency physicians are uniquely trained with the expertise to lead skilled care teams in thousands of emergency departments across the country.



**Nearly half** of all medical care in the United States is delivered in an emergency department.



**Nearly 70%** of emergency care goes uncompensated or undercompensated.



**Nine in ten** say it is essential to have 24/7 access to the ER, the highest of any utility or service that communities provide.



**Only 2.5%** of the patients seen in 2020 came to the emergency department for a non-urgent medical condition.



**More than half** of adults who sought immediate medical care chose to go to an emergency department because urgent care was unavailable, or they were referred by a medical provider.