

CONSENSUS STATEMENT

DEFINITIONS FOR CONSISTENT EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT METRICS

The emergency department (ED) has become the “portal to the community” and the entry point where most patients are introduced to the health care system. It is also a logical place to expedite needed reform to ensure universal access to essential health care services. This situation has led the undersigned stakeholder organizations to develop metrics that will aid in helping to alleviate the critical situation facing our emergency departments in the care of their patients.

DEFINITIONS – TIME STAMPS

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

A dedicated location serving an unscheduled patient population requesting emergency assessment.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ARRIVAL TIME*

The time that the patient first arrives at the institution for the purpose of requesting emergency care should be recorded as the arrival time. This is the first contact not necessarily registration time or the triage time.

*Emergency Medical Services (EMS): EMS vehicle arrives at emergency department door.

*Ambulatory: A patient requests care, or is asked by ED staff if they are here to receive emergency care.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OFFLOAD TIME

Time of transfer of the patient from the EMS stretcher to the ED treatment space with assumption of care by ED staff.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TRANSFER OF CARE FROM PREHOSPITAL PROVIDERS TIME

The time care is accepted by hospital staff.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TRIAGE TIME

The time that rapid or comprehensive triage is initiated by a registered nurse or institutionally credentialed provider.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TREATMENT SPACE TIME*

Time of placement in a treatment space (facility specific).

*“Treatment Space” is any space the hospital/facility accepts as a space to render emergency department care.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PHYSICIAN/ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE (APRN)/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) CONTACT

The time of first contact of the physician, APRN, or PA (defined as an institutionally credentialed provider) with the patient to initiate the medical screening exam.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DOCUMENTATION OF DISPOSITION TO DISCHARGE

The time that the ED physician/APRN/PA completes a documented decision to discharge the patient*.

*"Documented decision to discharge the patient" is when the medical screening exam and all treatments and interventions are completed, the diagnostic results reviewed, and the patient is ready for discharge.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DECISION TO ADMIT

The time that the ED physician/APRN/PA documents a decision to admit the patient*.

*"Documents a decision to admit the patient" when the medical screening exam has been completed and stabilizing treatments and interventions have been initiated, diagnostic results needed for admission have been reviewed, and the physician is ready (per hospital process) to initiate the admission process.

At the current time, the ED Metrics Stakeholders believe that this time stamp is variable and should be defined and made consistent through all institutions.

ADMISSION TIME

The time that the admission order is documented.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DEPARTURE TIME

The time of physical departure of a patient from the ED treatment space. The time most closely represented by being out of the department and no longer the ED's responsibility.

DEFINITIONS – TIME INTERVALS

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT LENGTH OF STAY

ED arrival time to ED departure time.

ADMITTED EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT

The duration of time a patient remains in the emergency department after the decision to admit the patient to the facility has occurred, but before the patient has been transferred to an inpatient unit.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OFFLOAD INTERVAL

Time of arrival to time of transfer of the patient from the EMS stretcher to the ED treatment space, with assumption of care by ED staff.

Signed by:

American Academy of Emergency Medicine

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

American College of Emergency Physicians

American Nurses Association

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses

Emergency Department Practice Management Association

Emergency Nurses Association

National Association of EMS Physicians

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