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Specialty Hospitals

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The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) believes that quality patient care can be supported within the existing healthcare system only if access to timely specialty services is assured through appropriate public policy initiatives and health care reimbursement systems.

Physician migration to specialty hospitals, defined as those that are primarily or exclusively engaged in the care and treatment of patients with a cardiac, orthopedic, or psychiatric condition or receiving a surgical procedure,¹ may lead to loss of specialty physician coverage and access to care for emergency patients, which risks straining the existing health care system and may lead to adverse health consequences.

ACEP supports mitigating such adverse consequences with continued application and enforcement of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act and with additional measures to preserve patient care and safety in full-service hospitals. Policies must be maintained and enacted that ensure specialty hospitals do not become a detriment to emergency department availability of on-call specialists, hospital sustainability, or access to care.

Reference

1. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Specialty Hospital Issues. Notification issued March 2004. Available at: https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Fraud-and-Abuse/PhysicianSelfReferral/specialty_hospital_issues.html. Last accessed June 8, 2023.