

Hospital Name:

San Antonio Community
Hospital

Address:

999 San Bernardino Road
Upland, CA 91786

Contact:

Steve Ernst, MD
Emergency Department Medical
Director
(909) 985-2811

2006 ED Volume: 59,979
Growth from 2005: -1.1%
Total Staffed Hospital Beds: 308
Acute ED Beds: 23
Fast Track: No
Clinical Decision Unit: No

Problem to be Resolved:

Long wait times in the ED.

Key Words:

- Wait time
- Electronic records
- Standard Care Protocols

Lessons Learned:

The time that patients spend waiting doesn't have to be wasted; it can instead be used to begin the course of treatment.

Reason for Change:

After implementing a new and more accurate electronic records system, San Antonio Community Hospital discovered that they had a serious problem of long wait times. The facility, originally designed to see 30,000 patients annually, in fact saw nearly 65,000 patients in the ED in 2003.

Implementation:

ED management at San Antonio Community Hospital sought to make better use of the time that patients spend waiting in the ED. Specifically, they were looking to establish standard protocols to begin treatment for specific conditions during long waits in the ED. They came up with protocols for abdominal pain, congestive heart failure, and shortness of breath, among other common complaints. Altogether there are 14 protocols, which account for more than half of the conditions seen in the ED.

Initially there was resistance from many staff members to these new care protocols, but having a few key staff champions helped spread acceptance of this new care concept.

Results/Impact:

In the two years following San Antonio Community Hospital's adoption of standard care protocols, the left without being seen rate dropped from 4.2 percent to 2.4 percent. Patient satisfaction improved significantly, from the 33rd percentile to the 84th percentile. Additionally, wait times improved, with the door-to-triage time dropping from 30 to 18 minutes, the door-to-treatment time dropping from 111 to 40 minutes, and the average wait time for patient beds decreasing from 4 to 2.5 hours.