

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.



NEWS

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National Report Card Grades Wisconsin's Emergency Medicine System

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) today released a National Report Card on the State of Emergency Medicine. Each state was given a "grade" on the system they have in place to support emergency services.

Wisconsin Hospital Association President Steve Brenton issued the following statement in response to the ACEP report on Wisconsin's emergency medicine system:

"This report is not a grade on the quality or safety of care that is provided in hospital emergency departments or by the physicians who provide emergency care. Rather, it is a report on the state's emergency medicine system and it evaluates the state on its efforts to prevent injuries and improve public health so emergency care wouldn't be needed.

We agree with ACEP wholeheartedly on two points in their report card:

As the number of uninsured or underinsured who use the emergency department to access non emergent, primary care increases, it will drive up health care costs and congest the emergency departments in Wisconsin hospitals, thereby reducing access. Hospitals are addressing the issue of patients who arrive in the ED who are not in need of emergent care in a number of ways, including but not limited to locating walk in clinics and urgent care services near the emergency department.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down the cap on non-economic damages associated with medical liability last summer. The impact of that decision is already being felt here, as physicians are turning down opportunities to practice in Wisconsin, according to hospital physician recruiters. We have attracted medical residents to our state in the past because of our favorable medical liability environment. With our medical liability environment now graded at a 'D' by the American College of Emergency Physicians, when prior to last summer we probably would have received an 'A,' our ability to attract medical residents and physicians, particularly physicians in specialties that are high risk, such as emergency medicine, is in serious jeopardy."

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