

&lt;&lt;Back




Reported by Sarah Platt  
**Report Card On Emergency Care**



If Wisconsin got a letter grade for its emergency care, one study says the state earns a C-minus. That's the same grade the nation gets overall. The study looks at four main areas under emergency care. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, Wisconsin ranks about average compared to other states when it comes to emergency care.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association says the report isn't a grade on quality, but rather a look at how much each state assists their hospitals in emergency care. Although the state of Wisconsin earned a C-minus, healthcare officials in La Crosse say many of the emergency care facilities in western Wisconsin are already ahead of the game in terms of handling urgent care. "But in western Wisconsin, we do that routinely, Gundersen Lutheran is actively involved in our training and our hospital personnel in those types of disasters," says Jim Klock, Administrative Director of Emergency Services.

The study gives a letter grade in four main areas, including access to care, quality and safety, injury prevention, and medical liability. Wisconsin's highest grade is a B-minus in access to care. It's lowest grade is a D on it's medical liability issues. The study points out Wisconsin could improve on medical liability reform. Since the state Supreme Court cut caps on pain and suffering lawsuits, the study says hospitals have a harder time attracting physicians to the area. "Given that change in the gap, it is already causing some physicians to consider going elsewhere, when they're looking at a residency program or to work as a specialty physician, the impact is there and it needs to be resolved," says Klock.

Klock says Gundersen Lutheran is also looking at ways to improve the flow in Urgent Care and work on healthcare education in the public arena. "But also to look at ways we can improve care for patients before they arrive, maybe to obviate a trip to the hospital, when they could be better cared for elsewhere," says Klock.

A spokesperson for Franciscan Skemp says they agree with the Wisconsin Hospital's Association stand on the issue, saying the report makes a number of valid points, but they say it should not be looked at as a grade on the quality or safety of their services.

To learn more on how Wisconsin fared on it's report card, just go to [www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org). That's the site for the American College of Emergency Physicians.



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