

REPORTING TIME SPENT IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS

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The Ontario government is publicly reporting time spent in hospital emergency rooms (ERs) on www.ontariowaittimes.com.

The site provides detailed information on “total time spent in the ER.” This is maximum time spent by 9 of 10 patients in the ER and is measured from the time patients register or initially see a triage nurse (who assesses the level of urgency for treatment), until the time they leave the ER. The time patients leave the ER may be when they are sent home after being treated or when they are admitted to a hospital ward or inpatient bed, if medically necessary.

While a patient is spending time in the emergency room, doctors and nurses may be diagnosing or treating their condition, or ordering tests and waiting for results in order to determine the best treatment. Sometimes treatment for a condition requires admission to a bed in the hospital, which may result in a patient spending more time being cared for in the ER before a bed becomes available.

The Emergency Department Reporting System was developed and implemented across the province in early 2008 to collect information about time spent in ERs. The data is being collected from 128 hospital ERs. This data represents almost 90 per cent of all ER visits in the province.

The ER data being reported is not real-time information and is four months old. Ontario is continuously enhancing its reporting process, which will enable us to report more recent ER information to Ontarians.

This information (the time spent by nine out of 10 patients) is being reported in three categories:

- All ER patients
- Patients whose conditions are minor or uncomplicated that require less time for diagnosis treatment or observation.
- Patients who have complex and/or life-threatening conditions that may require more time for diagnosis, treatment or admission to a hospital bed

The data in the table below is based on ER visits completed for the most current time period (October 2008) at hospital sites that have implemented the reporting system. The table shows an analysis between the current total time spent in ER versus the baseline (April 2008), total time spent, and a comparison against provincial targets where it applies.

	Baseline – April 2008 (Hours)	Current – October 2008 (Hours)	Target (Hours)	Percentage Completed Within Target	Current vs. Baseline Net Change (Hours)	Current vs. Baseline Percentage Change
All patients	9.4	9.2	N/A	N/A	-0.3	-2.7

Patients with minor or uncomplicated conditions	4.8	4.6	4.0	86.0	-0.2	-3.8
Patients with complex conditions	13.9	13.5	8.0	80.0	-0.4	-3.0

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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