

**ALTERNATE LEVEL OF CARE (ALC)**

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**WHAT IS AN ALC PATIENT?**

Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients are individuals who are occupying acute care beds in hospitals, but would be better cared for in another setting.

Acute care hospital beds should serve individuals who require short-term, intensive medical treatment for an illness, injury or recovery from surgery.

Once patients complete this “acute care” treatment, they often require an alternate level of care. When patients need an alternate level of care, it means they may require:

- a long-term care home
- complex continuing care
- convalescent care
- rehabilitation care
- home care
- palliative care

Close to 19 per cent of patients currently in a hospital bed in Ontario need alternate level of care.

**HOW DO ALC PATIENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE LENGTH OF TIME PATIENTS SPEND IN ER?**

An ALC patient occupying an acute care bed can create a domino effect in hospitals when there are no other beds available.

Patients who arrive in the emergency room and need to be admitted to an acute care bed end up waiting in an ER bed until they can be transferred. When all the ER beds are occupied, physicians do not have beds to examine or treat patients. This causes people to spend a longer time in the ER.