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Checking In On The ER

Concetta Boschetto
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Christina Ouellette

John Qiao

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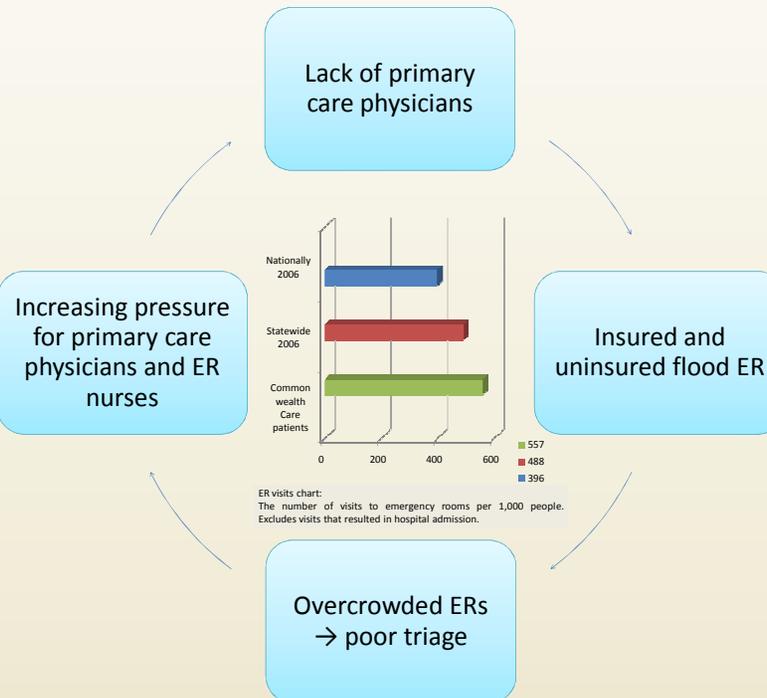
Overcrowded emergency rooms are caused by poor triage and disuse of primary care physicians.

Poor Triage:

- Triage is used to judge the urgency of a condition
- Inefficient triage creates long waits, misdiagnosis, and disgruntled patients
- Fewer and fewer triage nurses are being trained
- Nurses cannot deal with the amount of stress
- Triage requires experience that nurses straight out of school lack
- Patients are not informed of where they are in triage, thus they get restless

Lack of Primary Care:

- Newly insured are still going to ERs for routine medical care because they are waiting months for their first doctor's visit
- Current primary care physicians are quitting
- Medical students are pursuing other specialties
- Overloaded specialists lead to more referrals and increased costs of care
- As patient numbers rise, there will be more urgent care and less time for preventive services and getting to the depth of patients' problems



What Can You Do?

- Use our "ER Checklist"
- Inform/Educate others on the subject

Acknowledgements:

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What Needs to be Done:

Non-emergency clinic

- Volunteers
- Medical students will work to gain experience
- One doctor to oversee everything

Shorten waiting times in emergency rooms

- Incentives for people to pursue nursing as a career (scholarship)
- Have Nurses check on patients periodically (hourly)
- Properly inform the patients
- Separate the seriously ill from those who are there for routine medical care
- Distribute pamphlets to educate the patients

Increase the number of Primary Care Physicians

- Remove the pressure for primary care physicians / incentives should be based on quality outcomes, not on patient volume
- Make primary care more attractive to medical students by forgiving student loans for those who choose primary care as a career
- Develop a primary care early acceptance program to selectively admit students who seek to pursue primary care careers
- Restructure the medical school curricula to emphasize more primary care courses
- Emphasize and refocus the importance of primary care in the residency program
- Making primary care practice more manageable and income comparable with that in other specialties
- More primary doctors= less specialists= lower overall cost/burden

Communication Between ER Staff and Patients

- Better explain the patients condition
- Make sure patient understands what to do to treat it/follow up
- Inform primary care physician of patient's visit and course of treatment(EMR)