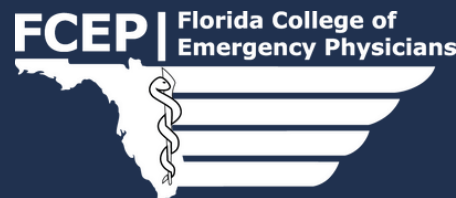


POSITION STATEMENT

THE IMPACT OF LIMITED ACCESS ON MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS



The Florida College of Emergency Physicians (FCEP) believes that workplace violence is a preventable and significant public health problem, and that optimal patient care can be achieved only when patients, health care workers, and all other persons in the emergency department (ED) are protected against violent acts occurring within the department. Further, FCEP maintains that **access to healthcare and resources** significantly influences both **mental health outcomes** and the occurrence of **violence** in emergency departments (EDs).

Inadequate access to mental health services leads to poor outcomes for individuals and families, disrupts patient flow, and overburdens ED staff. Likewise, behavioral health crises often result in violence or aggression in EDs, further exacerbated by resource limitations. To address this, we must prioritize improving access to mental health services, enhancing ED resources, and implementing effective interventions to promote better mental health outcomes and prevent violence in emergency settings.

1. Mental Health Outcomes:

- Limited access to mental health services can lead to several adverse consequences:
 - Poor outcomes for individuals and families due to inadequate support.
 - Negative patient experiences within the ED.
 - Overburdening of ED staff.
 - Disruptions in patient flow and throughput.
 - Increased costs for health systems.¹

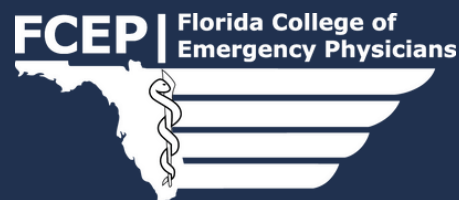
2. Violence in the ED:

- Behavioral health crises often result in violence or aggression in EDs.
- Resource limitations exacerbate this issue:
 - Inadequate capacity to support individuals with behavioral health needs.
 - Staff overload due to managing behavioral health emergencies.
 - Negative impact on patient care and experience.
 - Cost implications for health systems.¹
- Workplace violence is a concern, especially in EDs dealing with mental health crises.
- Collaborative care models connecting patients with appropriate community resources are crucial.³

Improving access to mental health services, enhancing ED resources, and implementing effective interventions will positively impact both mental health outcomes and violence prevention in emergency departments. Hospitals must also act to ensure the safety of the teams providing care in their facilities. We support programs in hospitals that build a safety culture and promote wellness within the institution. FCEP recognizes that the EMS system is also an integral component of emergency care and supports and encourages efforts to protect EMS personnel against physical violence in the prehospital environment.

POSITION STATEMENT

THE IMPACT OF LIMITED ACCESS ON MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS



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3. ACEP; ENA. May 2023. *ACEP and ENA Urge Congressional Action on Workplace Violence, Mental Health Care*. Emergencyphysicians.org. <https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/press-releases/2023/5-3-23-acep-and-ena-urge-congressional-action-on-workplace-violence-mental-health-care>.



The Florida College of Emergency Physicians is a statewide medical specialty organization representing over 2,100 emergency physicians who care for more than 17 million patients in Florida's emergency departments every year. FCEP is a state chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and is led by a board of 22 member physicians.



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