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Regarding: effects of emergency department expansion on emergency department patient flow. In reply.

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Dear Editor:

We appreciate the comments from Drs. Patel and Vinson. Similar to their experience,¹ we found that emergency department (ED) expansion alone does not significantly affect measures of ED crowding.² Based on the data from these two centers and prior experience from a third hospital system,³ ED and hospital administrators should no longer expect improvement in ED metrics (ED length of stay, boarding hours, left without being seen, etc.) solely by increasing the size of their ED.

We agree that a multidisciplinary approach including hospital leadership and focusing on process improvement is a promising strategy for reducing ED crowding.^{1,4} Efforts to reduce ED crowding should consider both physical and process changes to the ED and hospital and not rely solely on ED bed expansion. Furthermore, rigorous study and publication of results of these efforts is needed to identify the best methods so that implementation beyond the local hospital is possible.

References

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