

For Immediate Release:
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Backgrounder: York Central Hospital Seeing Steady Progress in Reducing Waiting Times!

What is time spent in ER?

“Total Time Spent in the ER” is the maximum amount of time 9 out of 10 patients spend in an ER receiving care or waiting for admission to a hospital bed. It begins when a patient registers until the patient is discharged or is admitted to a hospital bed. During that time, emergency room doctors and nurses may be treating a patient's condition, ordering tests and waiting for results in order to determine the best course of treatment. Sometimes treatment for a condition requires admission to a hospital bed, which may mean that the patient spends more time being cared for in the ER before a bed becomes available.

How is time spent in ER measured?

An information system analyzes specific information collected by ERs. The system uses information such as: the time of arrival at the ER and the time a patient is sent home or admitted to a hospital bed. From this collective information, the total time a patient spends in the ER is determined.

Why is the data four months old?

This is a new information system and has never been used before in Ontario. However, Ontario is developing a new process that will enable us to report more recent ER information to Ontarians.

Why do you spend time in the ER?

There are many reasons why patients spend time in the ER:

- Situations may arise when the number of patients in need of treatment is more than can be provided with immediate care. This could mean that you will spend more time in the ER for diagnosis, treatment or admission to an inpatient bed.
- You may also need to spend more time in the ER in order to receive the tests and treatment needed.

Different factors can affect time spent at different emergency rooms :

- The volume and severity of illness and number of patients being treated or diagnosed may increase your time spent in the ER.
- Patients with serious or potentially life-threatening health problems usually require immediate care and are treated first. Unfortunately, this means that uncomplicated or minor conditions or injuries may have to spend more time in the ER. Staff and equipment

availability can also affect how long you may spend in the ER. Staffing levels can fluctuate and equipment, which may be required for your treatment, could be in use with other patients.

Certain hospitals have a higher volume of patients (i.e. hospitals in urban areas). Hospitals that see more patients are also more likely to see more patients with complex care needs. Sometimes, this causes less urgent patients to spend more time in the ER.

There are many other options aside from the ER where you can receive care for non-emergency or less urgent situations. You can find information about alternate options to an ER visit (i.e. walk-in clinics, urgent care centres, etc...) that are available in your area at www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/length_of_stay/public/faq.html

-30-

York Central Hospital (www.yorkcentral.on.ca) is a large, full-service community hospital with over 65,000 visits annually to its Emergency Department, serving a population of over 400,000 in Southwest York Region and beyond. Located in one of Canada's fastest growing communities, the hospital is on a Capacity Building Journey that focuses on using the best available practices, the newest technologies and innovative models of service to provide superior patient care.

The hospital has made significant progress on Phase One of its major expansion which is scheduled for completion in Spring 2009, and has secured funding to proceed with the detailed planning of Phase Two of its redevelopment. Among the many new facilities already open as part of Phase One are: new family birthing centre, new partially opened Emergency Department, new breast health imaging department, new York Regional Chronic Kidney Disease Program space and new 25 bed mental health in-patient unit. In the coming months we will open a new Critical Care Unit as well as new medical imaging department, new classrooms and auditorium as well as new chemotherapy, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault care areas, new fracture, plastics and ophthalmology areas as well as a new in-patient medical/surgical unit in the hospital's new Town of Richmond Hill Wing.

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