

NEWS RELEASE

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ER VISITS WILL INCREASE REGARDLESS OF TODAY'S SUPREME COURT RULING

EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS PLEDGE TO BE THERE FOR PATIENTS

WASHINGTON — In response to the United States Supreme Court's decision to uphold the individual mandate of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Dr. David Seaberg, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), today issued the following statement:

“The nation’s emergency physicians fully support the emergency care provisions in the law, such as inclusion of emergency services as an essential part of any health benefits package and the prudent layperson standard, which guarantees that health plans base coverage on the patient’s symptoms, not the final diagnosis. And regardless of the Supreme Court’s decision, it does not change the mission of emergency physicians. We pledge to be there for our patients.

“However, while there are provisions in the law to benefit emergency patients, it is clear that emergency visits will increase, as we have already seen nationwide. There are physician shortages and there are also drug shortages and serious mismatches between patient needs and available resources.

“The need to shore up our nation’s emergency departments is as urgent as ever. People come to the ER because they are sick, because they need help, because they feel – according to a recent [CDC report](#) – that ‘only a hospital could help.’ A recent study in [Annals of Emergency Medicine](#) shows that crowding in emergency departments is growing twice as fast as the rate of ER visits, principally because emergency patients are showing up sicker and with more complicated health problems.

“As the nation moves forward with implementing the health care reform law, we urge the Senate to follow the lead of the House in repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board, which was included in the law. The IPAB panel does not have any accountability to Congress, health care providers or the public and will harm Medicare patients’ access to medical care.

“Medicaid is intended as one of the means of expanding coverage. Increasing the number of patients on Medicaid without an equivalent increase in the number of physicians willing to take that insurance will surely increase the flood of patients into our nation’s ERs. Coverage does not equal access and critical problems facing emergency patients are not going away.

“ACEP has worked with — and will continue to work with — members of Congress to find solutions to improve the safety and efficiency of emergency care for all Americans. ERs are a critical, life-or-death part of our health care system and ERs need help now. This crisis in emergency care is everyone’s problem, because every person is only one step away from a medical emergency.”

Dr. Seaberg adds that this law also includes medical liability dispute resolution alternatives, but that the scope is extremely limited, which limits its potential effectiveness. America's medical liability system is broken and without true medical liability reform, patients' access to lifesaving care will continue to suffer.

For more information, visit www.ACEP.org.

ACEP is the national medical specialty society representing emergency medicine. ACEP is committed to advancing emergency care through continuing education, research and public education. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, ACEP has 53 chapters representing each state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. A Government Services Chapter represents emergency physicians employed by military branches and other government agencies.

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