



Pathways

ED, Hospital Look to Innovate

Fall 2000

The reasons are different, but the story is the same. The Emergency Department (ED), ancillary services, and the hospital strive to improve the delivery of healthcare, while containing costs and optimizing reimbursement.



It's an ongoing issue for healthcare providers to improve their current practices in order to remain viable and competitive. At the same time, they strive to remain committed to patients.

In an industry that is complex, diverse and always changing, such a challenge requires a dedicated, multi-disciplinary effort.

EMPATH, a leader in *Change Management*, successfully confronts this challenge and assists healthcare providers with system change and innovation.

The EMPATH team includes physicians and nurses who have worked in and led the ED and other parts of the hospital. EMPATH consultants have successfully spearheaded broad-scale ED innovation projects at academic medical centers, community hospitals, and multi-hospital

systems.

A recent project completed by EMPATH was a year-long, full ED redesign at a prominent West Coast hospital with 45,000 annual ED patient

visits. Starting with an ED needs assessment, EMPATH successfully led implementation of its recommendations with the ED staff through the full project, encompassing all facets of the ED patient intake and discharge along with its ancillary services – from radiology, to bed control, to housekeeping.

The changes that EMPATH implemented at hospitals positively impacted length of stay, patient process flow, costs and revenues, patient satisfaction, and registration/triage. Some of the results seen from our project include:

- ED Length of Stay reduced in 6 months by 30-50%
- X-ray turnaround time reduced from 75 to 35 minutes
- Patient satisfaction up 100-200% in 12 months
- Time of arrival to bed placement reduced by 75%

Solid, tangible results show the benefit of a focused approach that addresses clinical delivery, operations, finances and information technology. Regardless of size, location or affiliation, EMPATH can help guide every hospital and health care system on a path to unequalled success.

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EMPATH
1430 Regatta Blvd.
Richmond, CA 94804
888.4EMPATH
510.215.6220
fax 510.215.6320
www.empath.md



A Day in the Life of an Emergency Department...

Problem

- Prompt patient treatment often impossible.
- ED frequently crowded with long wait times.
- Concerned staff are stressed and frustrated.

Solution

- Reduce ED length of stay.

EMPATH will analyze and recommend changes to patient process flow. We will benchmark ED productivity, cost, length of stay, and quality indicators against our database to identify problems and monitor improvements.

- Unexplained wait times — the single greatest source of patient dissatisfaction.
- Patient assumes that ED staff doesn't care.
- Unhappy patients = patient departure prior to evaluation, as well as reduced admissions and revenues.

- Improve the care given and the patient experience.
- Try at all times to exceed patients' expectations.
- Learn techniques to improve patient satisfaction.

Our program, *Core Values for Caring™*, will help staff understand the ED experience from the patient's point of view.

- Ineffective processing of ED patients.
- Front-end processes cause patient delays – triage is backed up, and registration processes are inadequate or inaccurate.

- Get patients to a bed more quickly and reduce number of patients in the waiting room.
- Reduce front-end work and shorten triage nurse times.

Using industry *Best Practices*, we assess Registration, Triage, Patient Care, Process Flow, Laboratory, Radiology, Bed Control, Discharge, and Admissions. We then make recommendations for improvement and help you implement the changes.

- Long waits to discharge of patients.
- Long waits to admit ED patients to hospital.
- Long waits for medical staff's direct admissions.

- Redesign patient intake and discharge processes.
- Provide more timely bed availability.
- Get patients to an inpatient bed more quickly.
- Get patient treatment initiated in a more timely fashion.
- Get patient discharged more efficiently and quickly.

With a focus on efficiency and effectiveness, we can devise systems that allow for greater productivity without an increase in staffing requirements.

- The ED and ancillary services are not working together efficiently, creating roadblocks to efficient patient care.

- Create frequent, easily-measured data points that are unmistakable in assignment of accountability for sub-processes.
- Share data with ED and senior hospital leadership regularly, with assigned goals and timelines for change.

EMPATH's ED and IT experts can create the necessary policies and procedures, data collection processes, and reporting systems to generate meaningful data.

Benefits

- More patients served, with no additional beds.
 - Reduced unit cost per service.
 - Clinicians give more timely patient evaluation.
 - Patients receive medical care sooner.
 - Staff experiences less stress.
 - Ancillary services are less congested.
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- Measurably improved patient satisfaction and more satisfying work environment for staff.
 - Satisfied ED patients = more patient referrals.
 - More referrals from medical/departmental staff.
 - Greater staff cooperation and a 100-200% increase in patient satisfaction in one year.

Following our recommendations, results have included:

- ED Length of Stay cut — 224 to 124 minutes.
 - Thrombolytic therapy time cut — 70 to 20 minutes.
 - X-ray turnaround time cut — 75 to 25 minutes.
 - Triage time cut — 12 to 3 minutes.
 - Time of arrival to bed placement cut — 68 to 18 minutes.
 - Bed placement to physician exam cut — by 50%.
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- Time to fill inpatient bed with incoming patient reduced by 75%.
 - ED admission process reduced by 75%.
 - Housekeeping turnaround time reduced by 75%.
 - Time from medical staff order to inpatient discharge reduced by 75%.

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- Achievement of uniform and consistent measurement tools.
 - Realistic timelines and target goals for ED and ancillary services.
 - Better communications to hospital leadership.

ED Growth – Does it Make Sense for You?

Most of today's large healthcare systems recognize their Emergency Departments as operations having high-fixed costs with low variable costs. This combination can substantially impact the hospital's overall financial performance. EMPATH offers a series of strategies and processes that can be implemented through a Redesign project to achieve optimal financial and operational performance.

ED growth can come from increases in ED volume without changes in admission rates or payor class. Growth also comes from increases in EMS volume, recapture of patients who previously left before evaluations, and decreases in ambulance diversion.

Our experience with hospitals across the country is that after improvements in ED operational performance, ED volume can significantly increase—up to 20% within 12 months of the ED redesign. EDs can realize up to an additional 25% revenues in contribution margin. New revenue opportunities can be achieved through a series of changes in financial processes, in the ED registration process, co-payment and financial counseling processes, and ED coding assignments to the charge description master.

Most clients regain their total investment for hospital and ED redesign within that 12-month period by increasing ED and EMS volume and decreasing the loss of revenue opportunities. Does it make sense to increase ED volume? While each facility needs to make its own decision based on the organization's needs, our clients answer with an emphatic "yes"!

WORTHY ON THE WEB

A new emphasis on patient service, and on the marketing and advertising of the ED, can be a significant revenue producer.

To learn more about this important trend, see the article "Emergency Marketing" in the Sept. 4 issue of *American Medical News*, on the web at www.amn-assn.org



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510.215.6220
510.215.6320 fax
info@empath.md
www.empath.md

Request for Information

Please call us, e-mail us, or fax this page.

We look forward to hearing from you!

- Hospital Overcrowding** EMPATH is expert at working with hospitals to improve the processes that contribute to hospital overcrowding—bed monitoring, housekeeping, transportation, and the many systems that impact patient care. What results is timelier, more consistent healthcare delivery, an integration of inpatient and ED services, greater availability of beds, and improved operational and financial success.

- Ambulance Diversion** Ambulance diversions threaten the ability of the ED to deliver efficient, high quality care. EMPATH concentrates on the factors which create the problem—ED and inpatient overcrowding, the shortage of critical care and inpatient beds, the increasing number of ED patients, and staffing shortages. A focused plan to address these compound problems can significantly reduce the amount of time ambulances are on divert.

- ED Overcrowding** EMPATH works with your staff to reduce ED patient length of stay, to provide faster, more efficient patient care, and to enhance the inpatient intake/discharge processes. With rigorous attention to detail, we can assist your facility in managing this difficult and costly situation, resulting in less stress on staff, and increased patient satisfaction.

- Customer Satisfaction** To EMPATH, the customer is both the patient and hospital staff—and improved patient satisfaction starts with a satisfied staff. Our *Core Values for Caring*[™] program helps staff see the hospital experience from the patient's point of view, and makes customer satisfaction a daily reality.

I would like to know more about EMPATH's services.

Name _____ Title _____

Hospital _____ Dept. _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____

Administrative
Assistant/Contact _____ Phone _____

Annual ED Patient Visits _____

Annual Hospital Patient Visits _____