**Emergency Room Throughput**

An emergency room that is organized to have patients move through smoothly leads its hospital to improved patient care, enhanced public image and a larger share of the market. An emergency room that suffers from poor organization with the inability to register, admit, treat and discharge patients effectively can lead to inefficient throughput and may even compromise patient safety, have poor service and may even effect hospital viability.

While not rocket science, many emergency rooms are nevertheless plagued with chronic delays in triage, ancillary services and discharge or admissions. Our experience has shown that there are five key areas which are at the root of 90% of the delays in emergency room. These are:

1. Wait time for serious patients at registration, triage and physician intervention.
2. Wait time for ancillary services – blood draws, lab results, x-rays, etc.
3. Time for specialists
4. Bed availability
5. Discharge

Some of our creative solutions include:

Registering Patients by Acuity: A case study has shown that registering patients by their acuity decreased the average ED visit time by three hours, and the percentage of patients who left without being seen dropped by six percentage points. In addition, the time between arrival and bed placement for admitted ED patients decreased.

Dedicated “fast track” for low acuity patients run by Nurse Practitioners in absence of physicians.

Using a Discharge Resource Room: Using an area dedicated to providing discharge instructions and resources for inpatients to assist in preparation for their home care reduces backlogs normally caused by nursing staff spending time to discharge a patient.