

Behavioral Health Emergency Department Delays in Maryland



Results from the Maryland Hospital Association Behavioral Health Capacity Study

The Maryland Hospital Association contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a study of behavioral health emergency department (ED) delays with 29 hospitals across Maryland. Discharge or transfer delays are defined as when a patient remains in the emergency department longer than four hours from when a decision is made about where they should go (i.e., a disposition decision). This study presents the number and rate of behavioral health discharge or transfer delays, the number of hours or days the patient remained in the emergency department and the reasons for delays. This summary includes data collected from April 15, 2019 through May 31, 2019.

Rates of Emergency Department Delays

2,009 patients or 42 percent of behavioral health patients experienced a discharge or transfer delay during the study.

Collectively, these patients were delayed for **1,676 days**,  with an average of **20 hours** per patient. (Median=11 hours)

These delays account for **48%** of the time behavioral health patients spent in the ED.

Patients under age 18 tended to have delays **2X as long** (median=18 hours) as those age 18 and over (median=9 hours).






This difference is statistically significant.

Hospital's most frequently recommended Post-discharge setting

	Patients WITHOUT A DELAY (N=2,739)	Patients WITH A DELAY (N=2,009)
Inpatient acute psychiatric unit	20%	69%
Home with supportive services	66%	11%
Inpatient specialty psychiatric unit (i.e., Sheppard Pratt Health System, Brook Lane)	1%	7%
Residential chemical dependency treatment	5%	4%

Top Reasons for Emergency Department Delays

Note: Patients may have more than one reason for a delay during their emergency department stay, but each delay hour is only associated with one reason at a time.

	Number of DELAY DAYS (N=1,254)	Percentage of PATIENTS (N=1,630)
 Waiting for bed space in placement setting	538	45%
 Waiting for agency to accept, process, or deny referral	197	28%
 Medicaid or ambulance transportation delay	81	15%
 Placement setting refuses or denies patient due to capacity in the setting	186	14%
 Delay in creating or implementing care plan or referral in the ED	53	7%

Participating hospitals

Adventist Healthcare—Shady Grove Medical Center
Anne Arundel Medical Center
Carroll Hospital Center
Frederick Regional Health System
Garrett Regional Medical Center
Greater Baltimore Medical Center
Holy Cross Silver Spring
Holy Cross Germantown
Howard County General Hospital
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center
MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center
MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital
Medstar Montgomery Medical Center
MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

MedStar Union Memorial Hospital
Mercy Medical Center
Meritus Medical Center
Northwest Hospital
Peninsula Regional Medical Center
Saint Agnes Healthcare
Sinai Hospital of Baltimore
Suburban Hospital
The Johns Hopkins Hospital (Adults and Children's Center)
University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center
University of Maryland Medical Center
University of Maryland Medical Center Midtown Campus
University of Maryland Prince George's Hospital Center
University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center