

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM ENHANCES THROUGHOUT AND PATIENT CARE IMPROVEMENTS LEAD TO VHA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AWARD



**St. Bernards Medical Center**  
Jonesboro, Arkansas  
Annual ED Visits: 50,000

**Challenge.** With more than 50,000 patients coming to the emergency department annually, St. Bernards Medical Center needed a process that would allow the medical staff to successfully manage wait times, length of stay and left without been seen percentages for its growing patient population.

**Solution.** EmCare was awarded the contract and immediately went to work with hospital leaders to develop and implement an “ED Throughput Team” that addressed all areas of patient flow, from door to discharge. The team implemented a triage as well as a registration process simultaneously, allowing patients to be triaged upon arrival and registered at the bedside. Staffing changes were implemented for nurses that better mirrored patient load without adding additional staffing hours. Additional changes allowed more beds to be opened earlier while providing additional staff for later shifts.

Working with the EmCare-affiliated physicians, the facility also initiated an “ED Quality Improvement Team” that promoted stellar practice and patient outcomes. The team promoted the development of onsite nursing education programs that included a Trauma Nursing Core Course and ongoing leadership and triage training.

**Results.** As the result of these programs over a two-year period, the facility showed significant improvement in critical ED metrics and was awarded the VHA Emergency Department Award for improvement in the “left without being seen” rate and overall length of stay in the ED.

- Average Length of Stay: Decreased from 3.78 hours to 2.96 hours
- Arrival to Doctor Time: Reduced from 142 minutes to 6 minutes
- Left Without Being Seen: Reduced from nearly 4 percent to less than 1 percent



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