



POLICY DOCUMENT

PATIENT'S RIGHT TO ACCESS EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CARE

1. PURPOSE and SCOPE

- 1.1 This document is a policy of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and relates to a patient's right to obtain access to care in an emergency department.
- 1.2 The policy is applicable to emergency departments in general.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 Any individual with symptoms that lead them to believe that they have an injury or illness that could place their health in jeopardy, or lead to an impairment of their quality of life has the right to attend an emergency department.
- 2.2 For the homeless & disadvantaged the emergency department may be the only point through which they can access healthcare after hours.
- 2.3 The Australasian Triage Scale (used in the emergency department) rates the urgency of the patients presenting symptoms, in relation to a targeted, case specific waiting-time goal for medical intervention.
- 2.4 The Australasian Triage Scale is not a validated tool for triage out of the emergency department to alternative care providers.
- 2.5 The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine recognises the key role of community based primary health care to patient health and wellbeing, and the importance of the continuum of care.

3. PROCEDURE and ACTIONS

- 3.1 Care will not be declined or patients actively referred out of any emergency department solely on the basis of an Australasian Triage Scale rating.
- 3.2 Emergency departments will assess all patients who present for care, and will not refuse clinically necessary care to any patient.
- 3.3 Emergency departments will support the continuum of care, and actively encourage patients to make the best choices in selection of appropriate health care providers.