

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

**PULSE REPORT
2007**

Patient Perspectives on
American Health Care

PRESS GANEY®

Introduction

Dear Reader,

Change within the health care industry continues at an accelerated pace. The year 2006 brought many changes—from government regulations to quality initiatives to changes in consumer expectations about their care. In a constantly changing environment, it is important to step back and look at the big picture to evaluate both progress and opportunities for health care providers.

Press Ganey is proud to present the definitive source on hospital quality from the patient perspective—*The Emergency Department Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care*. The 2007 edition highlights findings from more than 1.5 million patients at more than 1,500 emergency departments (EDs) throughout the nation. Press Ganey, the health care industry's leading provider of satisfaction measurement and improvement services, conducted the patient surveys during 2006. The collection of findings is part of a series of Press Ganey *Pulse Reports* and *Check-Up Reports* being released throughout 2007. They will examine the status of health care quality across different care settings and from different perspectives.

Amazing things are accomplished in health care every day in the face of challenges and skepticism. This report explores the ongoing evolution of health care delivery. It identifies accomplishments warranting recognition and areas of care in need of more attention. By examining the state of health care through the eyes of the patients, physicians, and nurses who experience it, the doors open wide to the daily experience of health care. With a strong grasp of the existing state of health care quality, health care providers are equipped to push quality improvement to the next level.

Sincerely,



Melvin F. Hall, Ph.D.
President and CEO

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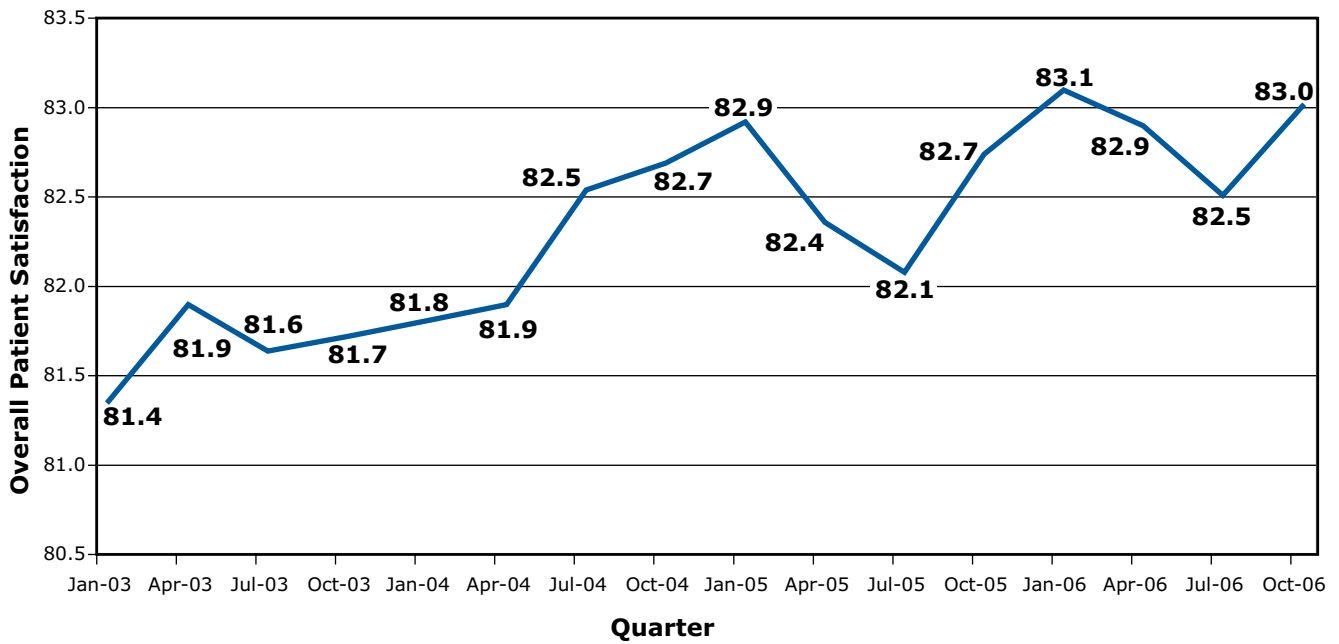
The *2007 Emergency Department Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care* examines the experiences of more than 1.5 million patients treated at more than 1,500 hospitals in 2006. The report provides national patient perspectives regarding the quality of health care. Key findings from Press Ganey's research include:

- Overall patient satisfaction with the emergency department (ED) increased between 2003 and 2006. However, there continues to be variation by metropolitan area, hospital size, patient age, and other demographics.
- The more patients an ED sees, the less satisfied the patients. Patients are also notably more pleased with the service they receive between 7 AM and 3 PM than any other time of day.
- Efficiency continues to be a challenge for EDs across the country:
 - » The number 1 priority for America's EDs is improving communication to patients about delays. While total time spent in the ED does have a strong impact on overall satisfaction, how well patients are informed about delays has an even greater impact.
 - » The average time a patient spends in the ED is 4 hours, compared to 3.7 hours the previous year. There are notable variations by state.
 - » Satisfaction with the ED drops considerably after patients have been there for 2 hours.
 - » The more patients an ED sees, the longer the patient spends in the ED. In fact, the average time spent in the ED increases by 30 minutes for every additional 10,000 patients seen annually. Patients treated at EDs with fewer than 20,000 annual ED visits were there for an average of 3.1 hours, while those treated at EDs with more than 40,000 annual ED visits were there for an average of 4.4 hours.

The *Press Ganey Emergency Department Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care* finds patients want care that is safe, complete, and delivered in a manner that respects their personhood. Communication is a key driver in satisfaction. Patients want to know more about their treatment and what the delays are in getting that treatment. The bottom line: If hospitals listen to what patients are saying, they can offer them better quality health care.

A visit to the ED is often anticipated with trepidation. In addition to the stress of an unexpected illness or accident, **Americans can expect to spend an average of 4 hours in the ED** (refer to page 6.) The longer the patient is there, the less satisfied he or she is with the experience. Overall patient satisfaction with EDs has increased since 2003, but there have been setbacks and corrections over the past 2 years.

Trend in Overall Emergency Department Satisfaction



If EDs are to make meaningful progress, they must listen to their patients. Three of the top 5 priority issues patients have for EDs refer to communication. Patients desire more information about delays and their treatment and they want more information relayed to their family members during the course of treatment. Communication aspects of patient care are critical to maintaining high patient satisfaction.

The priorities appear at the top of the Press Ganey National Priority Index, based on 2006 ED patient surveys. The National Priority Index combines information about hospitals' performance and the relative importance of each item to the respondents.*

National Emergency Department Priority Index

Survey Item	Priority Rank
How well were you kept informed about delays	1
Degree to which staff cared about you as a person	2
How well was your pain controlled	3
Nurses' concern to keep you informed about your treatment	4
Staff concern to keep family or friends informed about your status during your course of treatment	5

Represents the experiences of 1,509,541 patients treated at 1,552 emergency departments nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

**The survey questions referred to in the National Priority Index are ranked by hospital performance and correlation to the question "Your likelihood to recommend this hospital to others." Higher priority was given to those issues that are relatively important to respondents and for which hospitals scored low compared with other items on the survey.*

“The emergency department environment is fast-paced and demanding, with people coming to us in large numbers who are hurting and desiring quick relief for their pain or illness. We give them the best care we can. We rely on our patient satisfaction surveys to learn where we have succeeded and where we need to improve.”

— Will Watt, Director of Customer Services, John D. Archbold Memorial Hospital, Thomasville, GA

Metro Areas with the Highest ED Satisfaction

Competition for patients continues to increase as health care providers try to gain greater market share. The following table identifies the areas of the country with the highest ED patient satisfaction. Regions with the highest mean scores are setting a new standard for excellence. Remaining competitive requires a concentrated focus on meeting patient needs and expectations.

Top Ten Metropolitan Areas

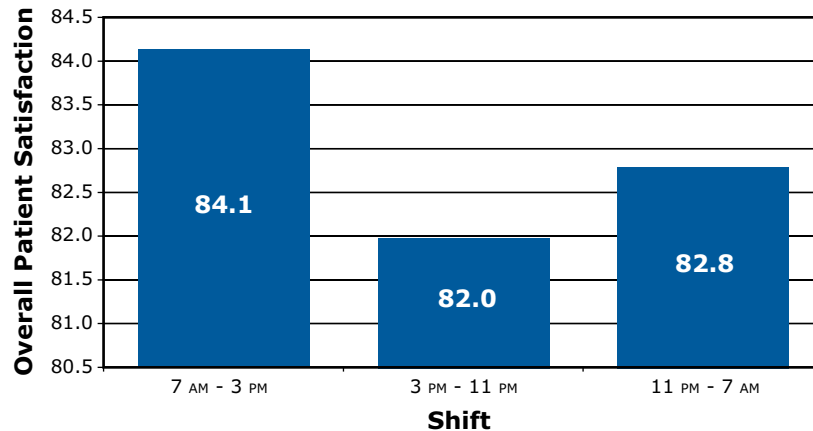
Metropolitan Area	Rank
Milwaukee, WI	1
Indianapolis, IN	2
Columbus, OH	3
Oklahoma City, OK	4
New Orleans, LA	5
Detroit, MI	6
Nashville, TN	7
Cleveland, OH	8
Kansas City, MO-KS	9
Chicago, IL	10

Represents the experiences of patients treated at hospitals nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Metropolitan areas defined as areas with population of 500,000 or more

Regardless of the city in which you seek emergency care, you may be more satisfied with the ED experience if you avoid the evening shift, 3 PM – 11 PM. Patients across America report the lowest satisfaction during that shift.

Patient Satisfaction by Shift

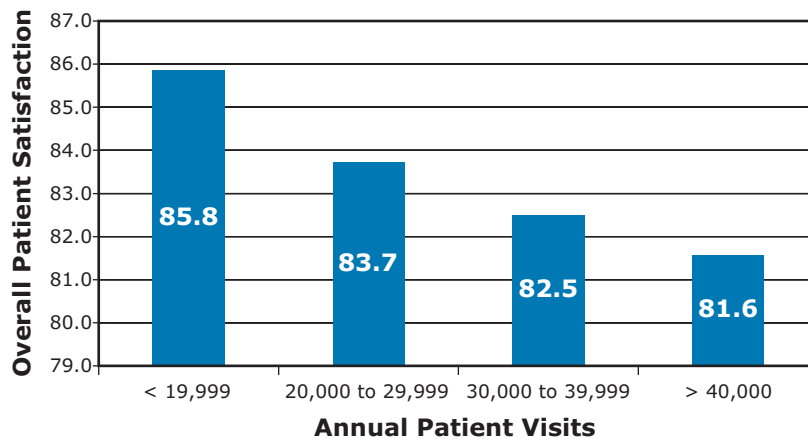


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Satisfaction by Volume

Patients are more content when they are competing with fewer patients for attention to their medical needs. The following graph shows that overall patient satisfaction decreases as the volume of patients increases.

Patient Satisfaction by Volume

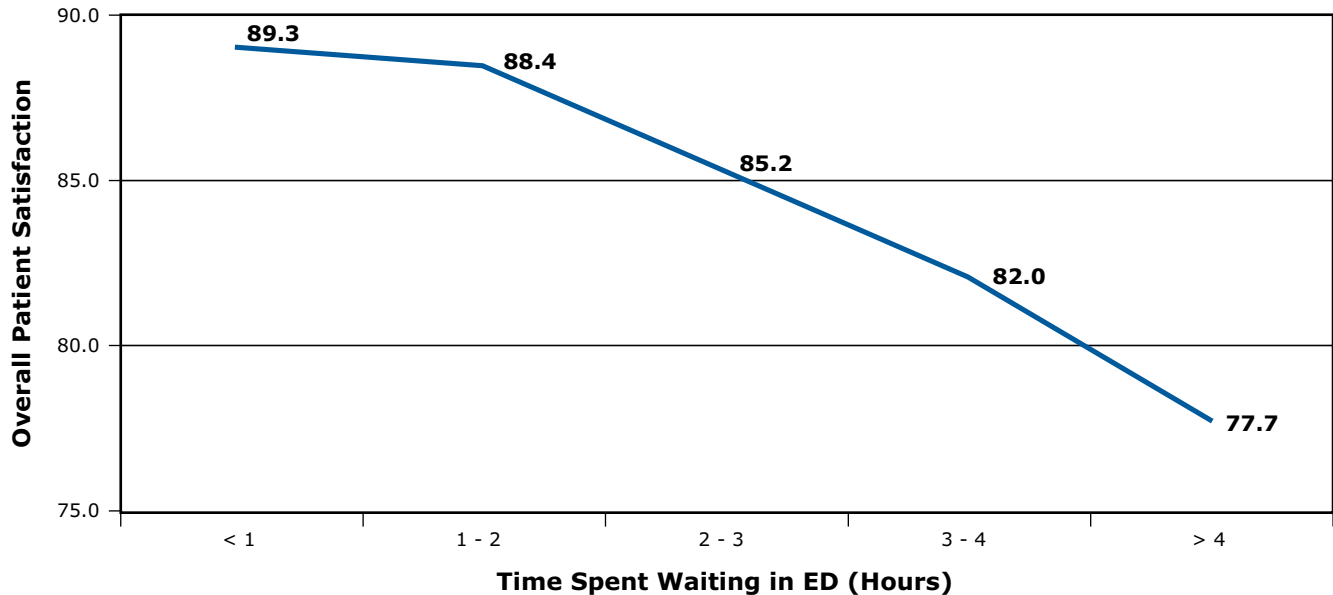


Represents the experiences of 1,509,541 patients treated at 1,552 hospitals nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

The Longer in the ED, the Less Satisfied the Patient

Time spent in the ED is a critical factor in the overall satisfaction of ED patients. The following graph shows that satisfaction goes down remarkably after about 2 hours.

Patient Satisfaction by Time Spent in the ED



Represents the experiences of 1,509,541 patients treated at 1,552 hospitals nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

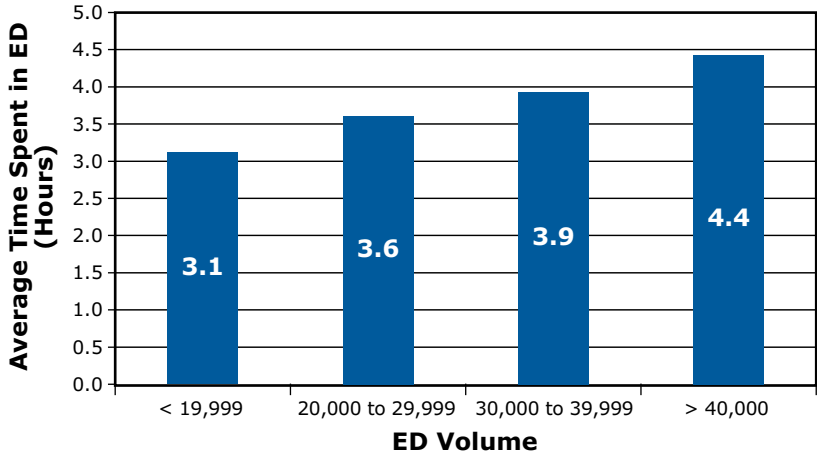
“Looking at patient satisfaction cannot be done in silos. When looking at patient wait time, you must look at all aspects of the wait—sitting in the waiting room, waiting for the doctor, and waiting for a test or treatment. These all tie into the patient’s perception of wait time in your emergency department. When considering improvement you must walk through the entire process, not just focus on one small area of the experience.”

—Consultant, Press Ganey Associates, Inc.

The Larger the ED, the More Time Spent There

It is not surprising that those who visit EDs with higher patient volumes experience longer visits than those who go to smaller hospitals. The following graph shows the average length of a visit increases by 30 minutes for every additional 10,000 patients seen annually.

Average Time Spent in the ED by ED Volume



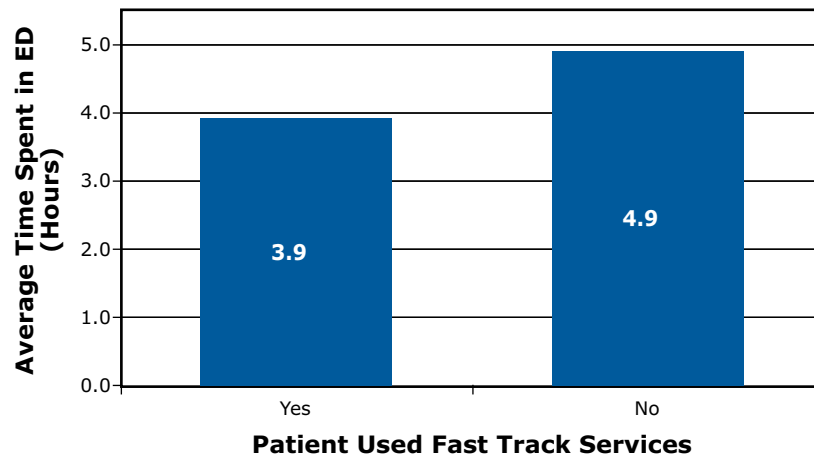
Represents the experiences of 1,509,541 patients treated at 1,552 hospitals nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Strategies for Improving Satisfaction When Waiting Is Inevitable

The chaos and unpredictability of the ED is unavoidable. Even with the many process improvements to reduce wait time, no ED is likely to eliminate waiting. No intervention can solve all the problems of a constantly overcrowded ED, but there are techniques that can help make the experience more bearable for patients.

- **Fast Track:** Many hospitals have worked to improve the efficiency of their EDs by instituting a “fast track” option. The fast track is designed for patients who need treatment for less severe injuries or illnesses and who are not likely to be admitted. A triage nurse typically assesses patients upon their arrival to determine if the fast track is an appropriate option. Patients who qualify for the fast track will likely leave more quickly, as demonstrated in the following graph.

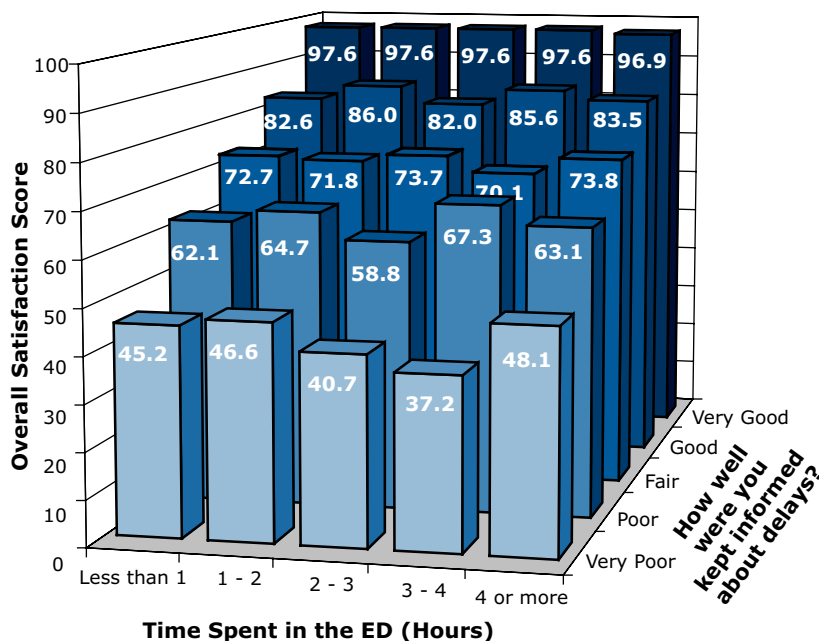
Time Spent in the ED by Fast Track Use



Represents a random sample of recorded patient comments nationwide at more than 1,400 hospitals between January 1 and December 31, 2006

- Information on Delays:** American patients have grown accustomed to long waits in the ED. Despite physical pain and emotional distress, the actual delays are acceptable as long as ED staff keeps patients updated on their status. Constant and consistent information about delays can increase patient satisfaction when the ED is at capacity. Keeping patients informed about delays sets their expectations and gives them a sense of control. As you can see in the following graph, despite a 4-hour wait, patient satisfaction can remain high if the patient feels informed about delays. Notably, patients who waited less than an hour but felt uninformed about delays gave very low overall satisfaction ratings. *(For ideas on how hospitals can handle delays, refer to the case study at the end of the report.)*

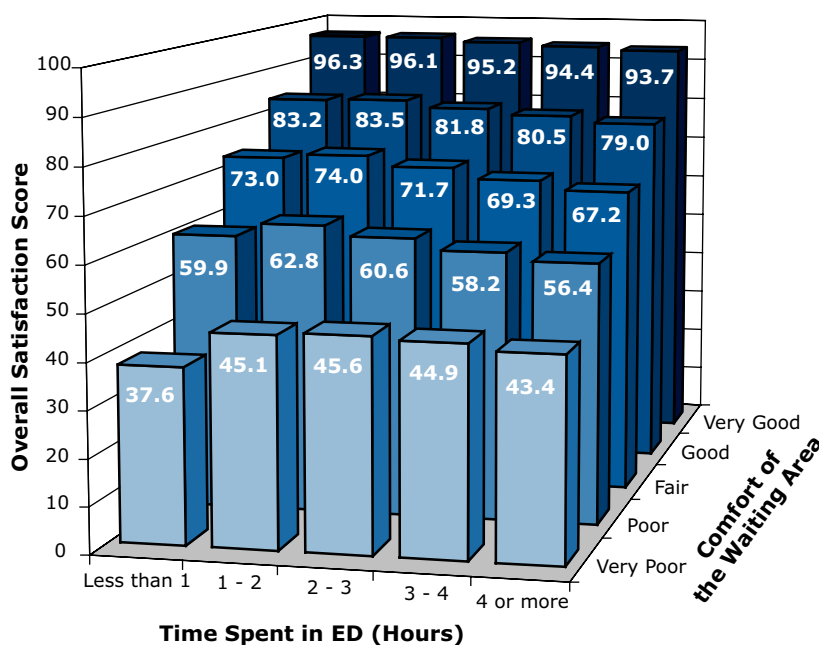
Patient Satisfaction by Time Spent in the ED and Information Received About Delays



Represents the experiences of 1,509,541 patients treated at 1,552 emergency departments nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

- Comfort of the Waiting Room:** The comfort of the waiting room is another opportunity to satisfy patients during a long wait in the ED. Patients who rated the comfort of the waiting room as “very good” (the highest rating) and waited more than 4 hours had only slightly lower overall satisfaction ratings compared to those who waited less than an hour. Patients who waited less than 1 hour were considerably less satisfied if they did not find the waiting room to be comfortable. Even 1 hour can seem like an eternity in an uncomfortable space. As the following graph shows, improvements to the ED’s waiting area can keep patients relaxed and satisfied during a long wait for treatment.

Patient Satisfaction by Time Spent in the ED and Comfort of the Waiting Area



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The following case study examines an approach to reduce patient wait times used by a network of medical practices in the Atlanta area known as The Emory Clinic (TEC). TEC's method can be applied to EDs or most any health care setting. TEC is a 2006 Press Ganey Success Story Award winner.

The mantra heard today throughout TEC is "If patients wait, they deserve an update." The academic, multi-specialty network of clinics had had its share of appointment delays. Problems with waits and delays appeared among TEC's top Press Ganey Priority Index items for more than 2 years. Members of TEC's leadership team created concrete, clinic-wide tactics for managers and staff to improve communication with patients.

TEC's steps to improve patient satisfaction and communication would eventually be called the "Waits and Delays" campaign. Here is some of what is included in the campaign:

- A clinic ambassador position was created to keep the staff focused on service excellence, keep patients informed, and cater to special needs.
- There was a staff contest to come up with a slogan for the "Waits and Delays" initiative. The winning slogan, "If patients wait, they deserve an update," was printed on pens, posters, magnets, and laminated cards and distributed to staff members.
- A program called the "Occupied Waits Drive" engaged employees to think of ways to keep patients occupied while they wait. Staff donated magazines and someone came up with the idea to have "Questions for your physician" notepads in the waiting area for patients.
- It became standard practice for staff to inform patients about delays every 15 minutes. Color-coded paperwork identified check-in times. Clocks and timers were added to all exam rooms and work areas. Physician delays were posted on a bulletin board to make staff aware of what was going on.

TEC saw positive changes in its overall patient satisfaction score and wait time specific questions. TEC is committed to continually improving this process to meet the needs and expectations of all patients.

To read more about TEC's Success Story Award win and its "Waits and Delays" campaign go to http://www.pressganey.com/client_recognition/success_stories/story.php?ss_id=48.

“It is easy to get caught up in everything that is going on, but patients in the waiting areas don't see the behind-the-scenes activity. They don't see the four ambulances that just came in the back door, or the severity of a patient injury that came in after them. All they know is that they've been there for three hours and people keep going in before them. By managing expectations and regularly updating patients who are waiting, you can begin to ease the burden of the waiting confusion.”

— Consultant, Press Ganey Associates, Inc.

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For more than twenty years, Press Ganey has been committed to providing insightful information that allows our more than 7,000 health care client facilities to continuously improve their performance. Our foundation for success is built upon dedication to scientific integrity, relentless responsiveness to our clients' changing requirements, and an overall passion for helping our clients succeed. By pursuing and acting upon input from our clients, we are consistently able to develop and deliver the newest innovations. We continue to succeed by exchanging knowledge with our clients, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge between our clients.

Among U.S. inpatient hospitals, roughly one-third currently contract with Press Ganey to measure patient satisfaction. With over 9.5 million surveys processed annually, Press Ganey has the most extensive database of patient, health care employee, and physician satisfaction data. Press Ganey's tools and services—measurement tools, consulting services, networking opportunities, and solutions for improvement—use patient, employee, and physician feedback to drive health care improvement initiatives.

All data and findings represent surveys returned by patients, physicians, and employees to Press Ganey clients.

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