



*"It all comes back to you"*

*For more information, contact:*

Sarah Yonker, Communications Coordinator

410-641-9663

[syonker@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:syonker@atlanticgeneral.org)

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***For Immediate Release...***

### 30 MINUTE ER PROMISE WITHSTANDS HEAT OF SUMMER VOLUMES

*Berlin, Md.* – When Atlantic General Hospital launched its 30 Minute ER Promise in February, clinicians and support staff hospital-wide were poised to make the commitment a reality, relying on the improved protocols and technology advances they had implemented months before to speed the efficiency of patient care delivery.

They met with overwhelming success.

During February, March and April, the emergency department met its goal more than 99 percent of the time. Only 17 of 6,471 patients who received care in the emergency department waited longer than 30 minutes to begin treatment or be placed in a treatment room.

But, hospital administrators knew the real test would come with the onset of summer and the thriving tourist season, when Ocean City becomes the second largest city in the state and emergency department volumes more than double.

That test occurred during the Memorial Day holiday weekend: nearly 260,000 tourists headed to the Shore resort to celebrate the unofficial start of summer this year, an estimated 20,000 more visitors than the holiday weekend in 2006 according to the town of Ocean City.

With 495 patient visits to the ER during the extended weekend, from Friday, May 25 through Monday, May 28, the staff still met the goal 95.9 percent of the time.

Andi West-McCabe, director of Emergency Services at Atlantic General Hospital, points to interdepartmental cooperation and a strong commitment by the emergency department and registration staff for this success.

“None of this could be accomplished without the incredible dedication of staff throughout the hospital – to ensure that physician protocols inside the ER are followed, that the vacated beds are turned over upstairs to accept newly admitted inpatients from the ER, and that we have the technology in place to speed everything along,” said West-McCabe. “We all worked together to guarantee that Atlantic General’s patients experience some of the shortest wait times in the country. It’s something to be proud of and something we will work very hard to maintain.”

The implementation of new technology also plays an integral role in the success of Atlantic General’s 30 Minute ER Promise. An upgrade to the patient tracking system, which is initiated via handheld computer as soon as a patient enters the ER, allows the triage staff immediate access to a list of patients’ symptoms to prioritize care, identifying those patients who can be sent to the fast track versus those who have more serious illnesses or injuries that require immediate attention. This has vastly improved patients’ receipt of care.

“This effort will continue,” said Colleen Wareing, vice president of Patient Care Services at Atlantic General Hospital. “We implemented new protocols and made sure any changes in the ER maintained our excellence in patient outcomes while minimizing the number of individuals who leave without receiving treatment. It’s that simple.

“We then launched the 30 Minute ER Promise to familiarize the public with the way we do things here and let them know that you don’t have to wait, like in so many hospitals across the country, to receive the emergency care you need. Without a doubt, it is working and people are beginning to learn that they can count on Atlantic General Hospital for efficient emergency medical treatment. I think it’s wonderful for our community. ”

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