



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved April 2014

Cultural Awareness and Emergency Care

Reaffirmed April 2014

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October 2001

Emergency physicians routinely encounter patients from diverse cultural backgrounds representing various customs, practices or beliefs. Cultural awareness is the ability of the health care providers to understand and respond to the unique cultural needs brought by patients to the health care encounter. The physician should consider the patient's culture as it relates to the patient's history and presenting symptoms in recommending a treatment plan that is mutually agreed upon by the patient and physician.

The American College of Emergency Physicians believes that:

- Quality health care depends on the scientific competence of physicians as well as their cultural awareness.
- Cultural awareness should be an essential element in the training of health care professionals and to the provision of safe, quality care in the emergency department environment.
- Health care providers should encourage patients and their representatives to communicate cultural issues that may impact their care.
- Resources should be made available to emergency departments and emergency physicians to assure they are able to respond to the needs of all patients regardless of their respective cultural backgrounds.