The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) believes that all medical students should be taught the basic principles of emergency medicine in order to recognize a patient requiring urgent or emergent care, initiate evaluation and management, and provide basic emergency care.

ACEP further believes that the public expects all medical students to be able to provide basic emergency care. Therefore, ACEP also believes that every medical student should receive clinical exposure to emergency department patients and care, taught by Board certified emergency medicine physicians.

The curricular basics can be accomplished in two separate ways: 1. By a specific curriculum designed by emergency medicine faculty, or 2. By incorporating essential topics of emergency medicine into the existing curriculum. Either approach will foster the prioritization of emergency stabilization of a patient or situation.

The emergency medicine environment places a premium on focused history and physical exam skills, functioning as part of a healthcare team, and diagnostic reasoning and critical thinking. These skills are essential for students entering any clinical specialty. Therefore, the prioritization of emergency care will benefit all students regardless of their ultimate chosen specialty.

The general educational objectives for all graduating medical students include general assessment skills for the undifferentiated patient, recognition and stabilization of life threatening illnesses, injury prevention and disease identification, unique content areas, management of the healthcare system and basic procedural competency.

An appropriate curriculum incorporates these six elements to create a progressive learning environment over the entire undergraduate educational experience from the pre-clinical to the clinical years. The exact format of teaching emergency medicine to medical students can take a variety of designs and should be tailored to local abilities, resources or curriculum needs, but should be driven by experts board certified in the field of emergency medicine.