

Approved June 2014

Responsibility for Admitted Patients

Revised and approved by the
ACEP Board of Directors
June 2014

Originally approved by the
ACEP Board of Directors
October 2007

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) believes that the best patient care occurs when there is no ambiguity as to which physician is responsible for each patient. Because admitted patients are sometimes held in the emergency department (ED), confusion may occur when determining which physician is responsible for an admitted patient's care. Emergency physicians may provide care to any admitted patient during a medical emergency. Emergency physicians should not be obligated to provide care during a medical emergency unless indemnified by the hospital or covered by their professional liability insurance policy.

For these reasons, ACEP endorses the following principles:

- Regardless of the location of an admitted patient within the hospital, the ultimate responsibility for an admitted patient's medical care rests with the admitting physician.
- Hospital policy and procedures should clearly delineate that once an admitting physician has accepted a patient, that admitting physician has assumed responsibility for the patient.