



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

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Cultural Awareness and Emergency Care

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Emergency physicians routinely encounter patients from diverse cultural backgrounds representing various customs, practices or beliefs. Cultural awareness is the ability of physicians 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 physicians and to the provision of safe, quality care in the emergency department environment.
- Physicians 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 and to avoid implicit and explicit biases.