

Policy Statement

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Emergency Physician Stewardship of Finite Resources

Revised January 2019

Reaffirmed June 2013, October 2007, and October 2001

Originally approved January 1997

As an adjunct to this policy statement, ACEP has prepared a Policy Resource Education Paper (PREP) titled "Resource Utilization in the Emergency Department: The Duty of Stewardship."

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Emergency Physician Stewardship of Finite Resources



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Emergency physicians have a responsibility to patients and society to be prudent stewards of the health care resources entrusted to them. To ensure the protection of patient interests under the constraints of limited resources, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) endorses the following:

- The best medical interest of the patient should be foremost in any clinical decisionmaking process.
- Criteria for appropriate use of finite resources should include (1) the urgency of the patient's medical condition; (2) the likely treatment benefit to the patient; (3) the likely burdens and costs of treatment to

the patient; and (4) the costs to other patients and to society.

- Emergency physicians should not allocate health care resources on the basis of the patient's ability to pay, contribution to society, past use of resources, or responsibility for his or her medical condition.

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