

# America's ER docs warn of surge in patients due to 'triple-demic'

11 November 2022, by Cara Murez



Emergency rooms are clogged with people who are waiting for inpatient beds or other care and it's causing a crisis, according to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).

ACEP is one of more than 30 medical, patient advocacy and [public health](#) and safety groups who have sent [a letter](#) to the White House asking for a summit to work on immediate and long-term solutions.

The problem is urgent as U.S. emergency rooms deal with a "triple-demic"—the respiratory disease threat of influenza, COVID-19 and [respiratory syncytial virus](#) (RSV).

Dubbed "boarding," the problem means too many patients are waiting to be seen by ER doctors, for hospital admission, to return to their nursing home or to be transferred to psychiatric, skilled nursing or other specialized facilities.

"Boarding has been an unresolved, systemic

challenge for decades, but it's currently at a level that we've never seen," said ACEP President [Dr. Christopher Kang](#).

"Patients with nowhere else to go are being held in emergency departments for days, weeks, or even months in some cases," he said in an ACEP news release. "Boarding is straining our system, accelerating emergency physician burnout, and putting patients' lives at risk."

ACEP collected more than 100 stories from emergency physicians throughout the United States to illustrate the severe consequences of boarding on emergency care teams and their patients.

Patients deteriorate and sometimes die while waiting to be seen, according to ACEP.

The groups are seeking [collective action](#) to help emergency departments address the crisis.

"If the system is already this strained during our 'new normal,' how will emergency departments be able to cope with a sudden surge of [patients](#) from a natural disaster, school shooting, mass casualty traffic event or disease outbreak?" the letter to the White House asks.

**More information:** Yale University has more about the [crisis in emergency care](#).

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