Healthcare Governance

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Institutional Affiliations

Author’s Note

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In a healthcare system, the terms emergency room and trauma center are often interchangeably used. It is therefore, important to understand the difference between these terms in order to receive appropriate medical care. Emergency rooms provide assistance in case of any medical emergency. They have necessary facilities, equipment, specialists and care providers that can handle all kinds of conditions. Trauma centers, on the other hand, are primarily situated inside emergency rooms. They handle the extreme and intense medical cases that involve the matter of immediate survival. They have highly advanced equipment and specialized surgeons to increase the probability of patient survival (UnityPoint Health, 2015). Trauma centers are verified or designated by the state or local government authorities or can even be verified by the American College of Surgeons (TCAA, n.d.). The health facilities in Alabama are licensed and regulated by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Requirements for Level I, II and III Trauma centers defined by American college of surgeons are as follows (American Trauma Society, n.d.);

**Level I**

* 24/7 in-house availability of general surgeons; orthopedic, neurosurgeon, anesthesiologist, radiologist, pediatrician, internal and emergency medicine, plastic surgeon, oral and maxillofacial surgeons and critical care
* Substance abuse programs for screening and intervention
* Incorporation of comprehensive quality assessment program
* Provision of continuing education for trauma team members

**Level II**

* 24/7 immediate availability of general surgeons; orthopedic, neurosurgeon, anesthesiologist, radiologist, emergency medicine and critical care
* Availability of tertiary care such as cardiac, hemodialysis and microvascular surgeries may be referred to level I
* Provision of trauma prevention training and continuing education for trauma team members
* Incorporation of comprehensive quality assessment program

**Level III**

* 24/7 immediate availability of emergency medicine physician and quick accessibility of general surgeons and anesthesiologists
* Incorporation of comprehensive quality assessment program
* Transfer agreement for referring patients to Level I or Level II for comprehensive care
* Provision of back up care for rural and community hospitals
* Delivery of continued education of the trauma staff
* Active outreach program and prevention programs

The number of Trauma centers in the state of Alabama are as follows (ADPH, 2019);

* Level I: 5
* Level II: 3
* Level III: 49

**References**

ADPH. (2019, February 14). Trauma Centers. Retrieved November 10, 2019, from Alabama Department of Public Health website: https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/aths/trauma-centers.html

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UnityPoint Health. (2015, January 9). ER vs. Trauma Center: What’s the Difference? (Infographic). Retrieved November 10, 2019, from Live Well with UnityPoint Health website: https://www.unitypoint.org/livewell/article.aspx?id=cafe17aa-df46-410c-9b6d-7855bf760f83