In coaching Emergency Departments nationwide, Studer Group finds that unless an ED can optimize flow efficiency, it will continue to struggle in its performance, even if it is communicating effectively and collaborating consistently. In addition to creating important operational efficiencies, good flow is critical for a number of other reasons. Most importantly, bad things happen—sentinel events—when patients who need care for serious illness sit in ED reception areas because there is no treatment space in the ED to begin their care. Patient perception of care also declines as wait times increase.

Figure 3.1
Patient Satisfaction by Time Spent in the Emergency Department

Represents the experience of 1,501,672 patients treated at 1,893 hospitals between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2009

Source: Press Ganey 2010 Pulse Report