

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY NURSES ASSOCIATION



Position Statement	Care of the Mental Health/Behavioural Health Patient in the Emergency Department
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## Issue

Mental Health/Behavioural Health patients present to the Emergency Department on a daily basis, in many various presentations of psychological distress and/or in crisis. Care for these patients is challenging but they deserve timely and compassionate care as is given to all other patients presenting to the department. Expert emergency nursing care for these patients will help insure appropriate care and maintain a safe care environment for all involved.

## NENA Position

NENA believes that all patients should receive timely, appropriate and quality care for any medical, mental health or addictive event or condition that they present to an Emergency department with.

NENA believes that every patient that presents with a mental health issue should receive a medical evaluation to insure there is no acute medical intervention is necessary.

NENA believes that all patients should be treated with respect, dignity, care and compassion in a non-judgmental manner.

NENA believes multidisciplinary collaboration between Emergency department staff, Psychiatry staff, Hospital administration, site Protective Services and Police services will work towards ensuring safety of not only the patient, but everyone in the Emergency Department.

NENA believes that whenever possible Emergency Departments should have 24/7 availability of a Registered Psychiatric Nurse to provide appropriate and professional care for our mental health patients in the Emergency Department.

NENA believes that having a Registered Psychiatric Nurse in the Emergency Department not only improves the care of our mental health patients, but assists in the education of other emergency care providers, in the care of these patients.

NENA believes that admitted Mental Health patients should not be boarded in the Emergency Department where the environment alone is not therapeutic due to the very nature of Emergency care.

NENA believes that a decreased length of stay in the Emergency Department improves patient outcomes, patient satisfaction and promotes environmental safety for all involved in Emergency care of the Mental Health patient.

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## Rationale

Emergency nursing encompasses the care of mental health patients with emergent, urgent and non-urgent situations. Mental health patients need to be provided with the optimal care in the Emergency Department. This emergency nursing evaluation and care must be, timely, safe, efficient and patient-centered.

## References

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