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Patients Spent an Average of Four Hours and Three Minutes in U.S. Emergency Departments in 2008, According to Latest Press Ganey Report

Authoritative Report on Emergency Department Experiences Released Today, Available at www.ImproveMyER.com

June 23, 2009 (South Bend, Ind.) – Press Ganey Associates, Inc., the health care industry's leading provider of quality improvement solutions, today released the *2009 Emergency Department Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care*. According to the report, patients now spend an average total time of 4 hours and 3 minutes in the emergency room (ER), also known as the emergency department (ED). That is a 27-minute increase in the nationwide average time since 2002.

Press Ganey's *Emergency Department Pulse Report* analyzed the experiences of nearly 1.4 million patients treated at 1,725 emergency departments nationwide in 2008. Notable findings from the 2009 pulse report include:

- South Dakota has the lowest total time spent in the emergency department (2 hours, 52 minutes) while Utah had the highest total time (6 hours, 48 minutes).
- Two states showed notable improvement in their emergency department average total times over the year. Virginia patients spent 23 fewer minutes in the emergency department in 2008 than they had in 2007, while patients in Maryland spent 14 fewer minutes in the ED last year.
- The metro areas with the highest patient satisfaction in the emergency department for 2008 were, in order, Miami, Detroit, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, and New York/Long Island. Miami moved up from third on last year's list, while Detroit moved up from fourth. Philadelphia was a new entry in the top 10.
- Patients who arrive in the emergency department between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. report higher satisfaction than those who arrive in the evening or overnight hours. Lowest satisfaction was reported among those who are in the emergency department between 3:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

- While average total times have increased since data was first collected in 2002, patient satisfaction is improving as many hospitals are communicating better with patients about delays.
- The economy is having a significant impact as the proportion of emergency department patients without insurance is increasing. Fewer patients are seeking inpatient and elective services.

“Today’s health care landscape, shaped by quality initiatives, transparency, and consumer choice, gives patients the ability to decide for themselves where to receive care,” says Richard Siegrist, president and chief executive officer of Press Ganey Associates. “Improving patient satisfaction in the emergency department is particularly critical for health care leaders because it is often the most visible public face of a hospital or health care system.”

The report, along with “Press Ganey Solutions for Consumers” and “Press Ganey Tips for Hospital Administrators,” is available at www.ImproveMyER.com. The site offers resources on emergency departments and improvement solutions for both consumers and administrators.

The findings and observations of the *Emergency Department Pulse Report* highlight progress being made in hospitals, emphasize areas for improvement, and explore the path to improving the quality of health care in the United States. Press Ganey works with emergency department administrators to assist them with best practices such as implementation of “fast tracks” or hiring dedicated staff charged with improving communication about delays in the ED. Other consultation tactics include:

- Analyze and interpret patients’ perception of care
- Identify priorities for improvement specific to each institution
- Assist with goal setting for improvement initiatives
- Recommend specific best practices
- Facilitate change management within the hospital

“No patient wants to visit an emergency department; but when they when they do, Press Ganey’s goal is to help hospitals treat the patient as quickly and efficiently as possible,” said Siegrist. “Keeping the patient moving through the right phases of the hospital— and communicating with them along the way— is beneficial to the patient and the hospital.”

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Press Ganey Associates, Inc.

For more than twenty years, Press Ganey has been committed to providing insight that allows health care organizations to improve the quality of care they provide while improving their bottom-line results. The company offers the largest comparative customer feedback databases, actionable data, solution resources, and unparalleled consulting and customer service. Press Ganey currently partners with more than 10,000 health care facilities—including over 40% of U.S. hospitals—to measure and improve the quality of their care.

Media Note: The 2009 Emergency Department Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care is now available at http://www.pressganey.com/galleries/press-releases/2009_ED_Pulse_Report_Press_Release.pdf. Podcast from the June 16 media Web Conference also is available.