

RESOLUTION

Subject: Ensuring Physician Presence in Emergency Departments Across the Commonwealth
Submitted by: Greater Louisville Medical Society
Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, emergency medical care is a specialized field requiring immediate, life-saving decision-making to accurately diagnose and treat patients; and

WHEREAS, physicians have extensive training, experience, and decision-making abilities to manage the complex medical situations commonly encountered in emergency departments; and

WHEREAS, current standards in some emergency departments do not mandate a physician's physical presence, which may compromise the quality of emergency care; and

WHEREAS, a recent poll conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy¹ found that 87% of respondents believe it is very important to have a physician physically present in the emergency department when they or their loved ones seek emergency care; and

WHEREAS, patients expect a highly qualified and experienced physician overseeing their care in emergency departments to ensure the highest quality of treatment; and

WHEREAS, physicians in the emergency department are often the sole clinician in rural hospitals overnight; and

WHEREAS, states such as Indiana² and Virginia³ have enacted similar legislation requiring the physical presence of a physician in emergency departments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA advocate for all emergency departments within the Commonwealth of Kentucky to be staffed by a physician who is physically present, on-site, and responsible for patient care at all times; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA work with state legislators to develop and support legislation mandating the physical presence of a physician in every emergency department in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

References:

1. Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy, Inc. Virginia Emergency Room Physician Presence Poll. Conducted December 15-19, 2023. Published January 2024. Accessed March 19, 2025. Available from: <https://www.masondixonpolling.com>.
2. Indiana General Assembly. Senate Bill No. 400. Health care matters; requires hospitals with emergency departments to have a physician on-site at all times. Indiana General Assembly website. Published May 5, 2023. Accessed March 19, 2025.
3. Virginia General Assembly. House Bill No. 353. Emergency department physician requirement; mandates 24/7 on-site physician presence. Virginia General Assembly website. Published April 2024. Effective July 1, 2025. Accessed March 19, 2025.