

What is Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation and why should my ED seek accreditation?

The Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation (GEDA) program is an ACEP-governed national accreditation organization which strives to improve the care of older adults presenting to the emergency department. This accreditation system promotes the goals quality of care for older people: enhanced staffing and education; geriatric-focused policies and protocols including transitions of care; quality improvement and metrics; and optimal preparation of the physical environment.

Three levels of accreditation with increasing requirements are available. Level 3 is within reach of every hospital. With a little more effort and dedication to quality care for seniors, Level 2 and Level 1 can be reached. Hospitals will start at the level that is most appropriate for their current resources and strive to reach a higher level over time.

A geriatric ED may be either a separate space designated for older adults, or more likely, the integration of best practices for older adults into an existing ED. It includes:

- Recognized staff including an MD/DO champion and an RN champion
- Supplementary education for all staff about older ED patients
- Screening for high-risk conditions specific to older people
- Care processes, protocols, or procedures that enhance care of older people
- An interdisciplinary team (eg, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, physio- and occupational therapists, physician assistants, physicians) to improve assessment of older adults.

Additional resources equipment (eg, food, chairs, mobility aids, hearing assists, clocks, enhanced lighting) and enhanced strategies for transitions of care for older patients into and out of the ED.

Becoming a geriatric ED will improve the care provided to older adults in your ED, will ensure the resources to provide that care are available, and signal to the public that your institution is focused on the highest standards for providing care to your community's older citizens.

Accreditation is an excellent way to convey to your patients, colleagues, and community that your ED cares about the service they provide to older patients. Today, 20 million seniors visit our nation's EDs. With the number of older adults growing rapidly, there is a critical need for more geriatric-focused care. Preparing for accreditation allows the hospital and ED to focus on the needs of this complex and growing population and to ensure that the resources available to the ED meet the needs of the patients they serve. Early data from existing models of geriatric emergency care – models that promote best clinical practices and create a more positive and sensitive physical environment –

show they have the potential to improve health outcomes, coordinate care more effectively, and reduce costs.