

# Primary Care in A&E

Primary Care Foundation, 161 High St, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XU [www.primarycarefoundation.co.uk](http://www.primarycarefoundation.co.uk)



## PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 09.30am on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010

### GPs in Emergency Departments improve patient care

The increasing number of GPs working in Emergency Departments can improve the quality of patient care, research by the Primary Care Foundation reveals. But 'Primary Care and Emergency Departments', published today, found little evidence for claims that this approach drives down costs or avoids inappropriate hospital admissions.

The report, commissioned by the Department of Health, estimates that around half of the Emergency Departments across the country offer some form of primary care service. When a consistent definition of all attendances was applied, the proportion that could be classified as primary care (types that are regularly seen in general practice) was between 10% and 30%. This contrasts with widespread assumptions that up to 60% of patients could be diverted to GPs or primary care nurses.

**Dr David Carson, joint director of the Primary Care Foundation**, said: 'Alongside general practice, this is the front door of the NHS. Patients know who their GP is and where the nearest Emergency Department is. So it's vital to get the service right. We were surprised to find there was no evidence that providing primary care in Emergency Departments could tackle rising costs or help to avoid unnecessary admissions.'

'Instead, GPs can add vital skills and expertise to the multi-disciplinary team in Emergency Departments, better meeting the needs of patients who present with the type of conditions commonly seen in primary care.'

**Dr John Heyworth, President of the College of Emergency Medicine**, said: 'The College of Emergency Medicine welcomes this excellent report, and strongly supports the concept of an integrated model with emergency medicine and primary care services working together to provide the best possible care for all patients. Recognition of the role of the Emergency Department as the hub for the provision of high quality, safe care, available 24/7, will avoid duplication and enhance the patient experience, as well as improving value for money.'

*Supported by the Department of Health*



# Primary Care in A&E

Primary Care Foundation, 161 High St, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XU [www.primarycarefoundation.co.uk](http://www.primarycarefoundation.co.uk)



**Dr David Colin-Thomé, National Director for Primary Care,** said: “I welcome this report, providing a realistic assessment of current primary care services within or alongside Emergency Departments. The report emphasises the importance of aligning financial incentives, allowing clinicians to focus on what is right for the patient. When planning these initiatives, commissioners should look at the whole urgent care system and the full patient pathway, not Emergency Departments in isolation”.

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

1. *Primary Care and Emergency Departments* is available at <http://www.primarycarefoundation.co.uk/>
2. A commissioning guide is currently being developed and will be available to soon for Primary Care Trusts and Practice Based Commissioners.
3. For more information, contact Primary Care Foundation Directors Dr David Carson, 07703 025775, Henry Clay, 07775 696360, or Rick Stern, 07709 746771, or email: [info@primarycarefoundation.co.uk](mailto:info@primarycarefoundation.co.uk)

*Supported by the Department of Health*

