

## Teaching the intangibles: How to manage an emergency department

<b>Authors:</b>	S. Yiu, D. Carr, J. Yaphe, R. Venugopal, M. Hodge, L. Puchalski Ritchie, B. Chang, N. Meshkat, A. Chopra
<b>Institutions:</b>	Department of Emergency Medicine, University Health Network, Toronto, Canada
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A round-table discussion among our junior and senior faculty members proposed the following strategies to teach senior residents the non-clinical skills necessary in managing flow in the emergency department.

The 6 core strategies include:

1. **Preparation**—a special orientation for senior residents should include staff physician manuals and administrative orientation with introduction to key nursing staff;
2. **Organization**—residents should be instructed to develop a global view of departmental operations; they should be cognizant of emergency department wait times and be proactive rather than reactive;
3. **Prioritization**—residents should develop strategies to handle disruptions and interruptions and to meet the constantly changing needs of the department over the course of the shift;
4. **Efficiency**—residents should receive training about process design and management to identify obstacles to efficiency and solutions to address them; they should be made aware of the appropriate use of available resources and reflect on how to improve efficiency;
5. **Communication**—residents should be instructed to clearly, succinctly and effectively communicate with colleagues, consultants and stakeholders; and
6. **Accountability and independence**—residents should be accountable for patient care and wait times and should be given the autonomy to manage departmental flow.

We are piloting direct observation shifts for staff to teach and assess these core strategies.