

# Ban on ambulance diversions doesn't worsen ER crowding

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A 2009 ban on ambulance diversion in Massachusetts did not worsen crowding in emergency departments or ambulance turnaround times, according to research published online Dec. 21 in the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

(HealthDay)—A 2009 ban on ambulance diversion in Massachusetts did not worsen crowding in emergency departments or ambulance turnaround times, according to research published online Dec. 21 in the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

Laura G. Burke, M.D., from the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, and colleagues retrospectively analyzed data from nine Boston-area hospital emergency departments before and after the ban.

Emergency department length of stay was used as a proxy for crowding.

The researchers observed no increase in emergency department length of stay for admitted or discharged patients or in ambulance turnaround time, despite an overall 3.6 percent increase in emergency department

volume. Overall, there was a 10.4-minute decrease in length of stay for admitted patients, and a 2.2-minute decrease in turnaround time. When analyzed separately, neither high- nor low-diverting emergency departments saw an increase in length of stay, and both saw a decrease in turnaround time.

"Our results suggest that the ban did not worsen [emergency department](#) crowding or [ambulance](#) availability at Boston-area hospitals," the authors write.

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

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