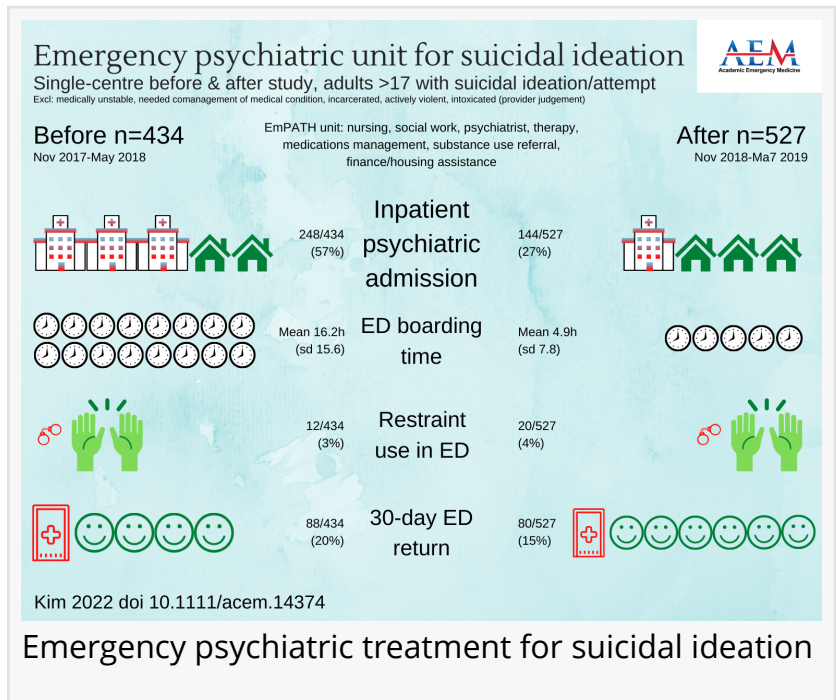


Emergency department psychiatric treatment improves outcomes for patients with suicidal thoughts

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The introduction of the emergency psychiatric assessment, treatment, and healing (EmPATH) unit improves management of patients presenting to the emergency department (ED) with suicidal attempts or ideation by reducing ED boarding and unnecessary admissions and establishing post-ED follow-up care. That is the conclusion of the [article](#) titled "Emergency psychiatric assessment, treatment, and healing (EmPATH) unit decreases hospital admission for patients presenting with suicidal ideation in rural America," published in the February 2022 issue of Academic Emergency Medicine (AEM), a peer-reviewed journal of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM).



The authors of the study created a 12-patient EmPATH unit in their rural academic emergency medical center to increase the supply of mental health care and to offload the demand from the emergency department. Compared with prior interventions, the EmPATH program was associated with a 50% reduction in inpatient psychiatric admissions, a marked reduction in length of stay, and no apparent signal of harm.

This is an important finding for those who plan a mitigating strategy in a tertiary ED and face boarding psychiatric patients. It shows the growing role of emergency care to address population health and to show proof of concept for an initiative to address a large and relatively silent disparity caused by living in rural America.

The lead author of the study is Allison K. Kim, MD, of the department of emergency medicine at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine in Iowa City and attending physician at Unity

Point Health in Des Moines, Iowa.

Results of the study are discussed in a recent AEM podcast titled, [We Care a Lot – The EmPATH Study](#).

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ABOUT ACADEMIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Academic Emergency Medicine, the monthly journal of Society for Academic Emergency Medicine, features the best in peer-reviewed, cutting-edge original research relevant to the practice and investigation of emergency care. The above study is published open access and can be downloaded by following the [DOI link: 10.1111/acem.14374](https://doi.org/10.1111/acem.14374). Journalists wishing to interview the authors may contact Tami Craig at tcraig@saem.org.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR ACADEMIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE

SAEM is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to the improvement of care of the acutely ill and injured patient by leading the advancement of academic emergency medicine through education and research, advocacy, and professional development. To learn more, visit saem.org.

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