

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EMERGENCY ROOM CROWDING DECLINED IN 2007**

BALTIMORE, MD (May 29, 2008) - In a letter to hospital CEOs, Fire Chief James S. Clack and Health Commissioner Joshua M. Sharfstein released new data showing a significant reduction in emergency room crowding in city hospitals in 2007.

"These data show that we are moving in the right direction," said Chief Clack. "I look forward to additional efforts to further ease the strains on our emergency medical system."

"Emergency department crowding threatens access to life-saving medical treatment," said Dr. Sharfstein. "It is good news that the efforts of hospitals, the EMS system, and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems are having a positive impact in Baltimore."

Compared to 2006, city ambulance transports in 2007 increased by 4.6% and patient visits to emergency departments increased by 1.2%. Over this period:

- Total hours of hospital time without available EKG-monitored beds (red alert) decreased by 35.9%.
- Total hours that the EMS system placed hospitals on "re-route" status decreased by 33.7%.
- The average ambulance return-to-service time decreased by 5.8%.

All of these measures had been steadily rising through 2005, with signs of improvement in 2006.

The analysis is based on information provided by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, the St. Paul Computer Center, the Computer Aided Dispatch system, and the Baltimore City EMS 911 System.

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