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◆ **Doctors Hospital of Augusta in Georgia agreed to pay \$180,000 in a civil monetary penalty settlement over alleged violations of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA).**^[1] The HHS Office of Inspector General alleged the hospital violated EMTALA in two instances on Dec. 13, 2015. In one instance, the hospital didn't provide an adequate medical screening exam (MSE) and stabilizing treatment to a 25-year-old woman who showed up at the emergency room complaining of ingestion of an unknown substance and loss of consciousness. The woman "was reportedly tearful and anxious, and complained of a headache, neck pain, face pain, and left shoulder pain," the settlement states. She was triaged by a nurse and given an Emergency Severity Index score of three, which was considered urgent under the hospital's triage policy. A physician medically screened the patient, but didn't include lab work related to her presenting symptoms, and then entered the patient into the hospital's MSE process for nonemergent patients. She was asked for money to continue evaluation, and because she couldn't pay, the patient was discharged, OIG said. She immediately sought and received treatment at another hospital. In the other instance, the hospital wouldn't accept an appropriate transfer of an 84-year-old woman with pneumonia and severe hyponatremia and hyperglycemia who needed intensive care unit (ICU)-level care, OIG said. The transferring hospital lacked an ICU. A physician at Doctors Hospital of Augusta declined to accept the transfer, "stating that the referring facility could manage the patient," according to the settlement. The hospital didn't admit liability.

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