

Report on Medicare Compliance Volume 32, Number 20. May 22, 2023 EMTALA Violation Is 'Opportunity for Us to Do Better'; Self-Reporting May Be a Hard Call

By Nina Youngstrom

A young patient who came to the emergency department (ED) at a UofL Health hospital in Kentucky was turned away by a registration staffer who mistakenly told the patient the hospital doesn't treat minors. After returning home, the patient called the ED to report the brush off, triggering an immediate response from the ED clinicians and the compliance department that was helpful when state surveyors came on the scene.

"ED was on it as quick as they could be," Shelly Denham, senior vice president of compliance, risk and audit at UofL, said April 24 at the Health Care Compliance Association's Compliance Institute.^[1] The event led to discussions with registration staff, a review of educational materials and a corrective action plan. "We had a training script developed to make sure registration staff understood what the conversation is when patients present" (e.g., not asking for payment, not turning patients away), she said.

"When the surveyors showed up, we were able to provide evidence we were aware [of the issue] and responded as quickly as we could and were taking ownership of the issue," Denham said. "The quick response and corrective action plan were appreciated; however, it did not negate the deficiency as we did not meet the EMTALA requirement." But it's an "opportunity for us to do better," she said.

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)