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Riverside Community Hospital launches text messaging program, sharing ER wait times with local residents



Riverside Community Hospital (RCH) in southern California has announced the launch of its new ER texting program. It's the only one of its kind in the area, and was implemented to help local residents determine average wait times at the ER, so they know what to expect.

How it works is; by simply texting "ER" to a five digit number from a cell phone, and then entering a zip code, a person can receive the average time to be seen at the hospital's emergency department. They'll also receive a number to call to speak with a nurse.

By texting "healthy" along with a five digit number, callers can also receive occasional health information and updates on upcoming hospital events. "ER testing is reaching the younger generation while keeping the hospital running more efficiently", says Patrick Brilliant, President and CEO of Riverside Community Hospital. "People are connected like they have never been before, so why not use this new capability to promote access to healthcare."

With this new program, a patient can know what to expect before they come to Riverside Community Hospital.

As the largest emergency department in Riverside County, Riverside Community Hospital's ER and Trauma Center is also the most efficient. For thirty years, RCH has been in partnership with CEP America, one of the largest providers of emergency department management and staffing solutions in the nation. Through the use of CEP America's Rapid Medical Evaluation® (RME) program, the wait times for most patients to be seen by a medical provider (physician or physician assistant) at RCH are less than 15 minutes. "With our RME program, we have eliminated the uncertainty of how long it will take for you or your loved one to be seen" says Steven Kim, Medical Director of the Emergency Department at Riverside Community Hospital. "With our short wait times, the hospital is happy to share this information with the community."

The text message program works using a technology that links the computer system in the emergency room with the texting abilities of cell phones. Of course in a true medical emergency, patients should call 911 for assistance.