

CDU¹ Staffing Guidelines

Emory Healthcare

EUH CDU low census staffing

Principle: The 8 bed CDU provides service to selected emergency department patients needing observation services. The CDU always has an 8 bed capacity. The unit is generally staffed with two RNs for eight beds. With variations in CDU nurses or CDU patients, some flexibility is required to maximize resource utilization:

1. **When the CDU has less than 4 patients, AND the ED needs nursing support** – the CDU nurse may be flexed to assist in the ED. HOWEVER, the CDU capacity remains at 8 and patients will continue to be assigned to the CDU regardless of this staffing shift. When the number of CDU patients (either in the CDU or in the ED awaiting a CDU bed) reaches 5 patients, then the second “flexed” CDU nurse will return to the CDU to assume patient care.
2. **When the CDU has no patients, AND the ED needs nursing support** - If both CDU nurses are flexed then the CDU nurse will return to the CDU when there are two CDU patients in the ED. The ED shift nurse manager has 60 minutes to transition the ED patient assignment.
3. **When the CDU has less than 2 nurses** (which may occur for portions of a shift due to staffing issues) – an ED nurse may be flexed to cover the CDU until the CDU has 2 nurses. If there is not a nurse available to assist CDU staffing then patients assigned to the CDU will be held in the ED until staff are available.

Recommend Guidelines - CDU nurses will not be assigned ED critical patient unless one has been properly oriented to acute care. The charge nurse will work with the CDU nurse to give an assignment that is manageable for the nurse. The CDU nurse should actively seek potential CDU patients and make suggestions to ED attending for CDU admissions - in accordance with the CDU guidelines. To assure success, flexibility and cooperation is required.

1) Clinical Decision Unit.

Source: Emory University School of Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine, “Emergency Department Clinical Decision Unit,” Emory Healthcare, 2014; Emory Healthcare, Atlanta, GA; Cardiovascular Roundtable interviews and analysis.