

# EMTALA sign requirements and language

Language, sizes and locations required by federal regulations and enforcement policy.

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HCFA language for COBRA Signs

The following language is required by the Health Care Financing Administration to be posted in all public entrances, registration areas, emergency department treatment waiting areas (including separate areas for obstetrics, psychiatry, and urgent care clinics where patients present on an unscheduled basis). This language is awkward, but its what the government wants...

IT'S THE LAW

IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY OR ARE IN  
LABOR, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE,  
within the capabilities of this hospital's staff  
and facilities:

An appropriate Medical SCREENING EXAMINATION

Necessary STABILIZING TREATMENT  
(including treatment for an unborn child) and, if necessary,

An appropriate TRANSFER to another facility  
Even if YOU CANNOT PAY or DO NOT HAVE  
MEDICAL INSURANCE

or

YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO MEDICARE OR MEDICAID

This hospital (DOES/DOES NOT) participate in the Medicaid Program

This sign must be clearly visible from a distance of 20 feet away or from patient's likely viewing point and posted in a manner likely to be seen. This requirement typically requires signs in general areas to be approximately 18" x 20". Signs must be posted in foreign languages where applicable, and the same size requirements apply. Signs in small cubicles or areas less than 20 feet may be smaller, but still must be clearly visible. Conflicting signs are not permitted if they detract from the COBRA sign or may raise confusion by references to payment, advanced authorization, co-pays, etc.

Please note that this requirement means that individual treatment rooms in an Emergency Department of area covered by the EMTALA rules, such as OB and psych intake areas, urgent care units, and walk-in clinic areas must have signs in the small size. Ambulance entrances and public entrances leading to the Emergency Department must have full-sized signs.