

FLOW = ACCESS

Applying flow strategies to maximize patient & resident access to appropriate care.

Last week, we talked about congestion. We thought it might be useful to help distinguish the difference between "surge" and "congestion." We tend to think of these two states as being interchangeable, but they're not.

- Congestion is what we work to avoid every day by having effective patient flow in and out of the hospital.
- When we refer to a surge, we mean a significant and unanticipated increase in what is usually a relatively consistent volume of activity. We know it's a surge because it is time-limited and has an identifiable beginning and end.

A surge requires management strategies that are distinct from those used to manage congestion. For example, a strategy to manage volume during a surge would be to open OCP beds. Conversely, opening these beds to manage congestion may provide immediate relief but will ultimately result in little to no long-term relief or change.

