

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It's isn't an ER

It is important to point out to the community a misconception about healthcare facilities on Kent Island, particularly in light of your headline in the September 8 newspaper about a caterpillar sting sending someone to the "ER."

The only true emergency departments, or "ERs," serving this region are those currently in nearby hospitals.

The freestanding Queen Anne's Emergency Center under development through a joint partnership of Shore Health System, University of Maryland Medical System and Queen Anne's County government, through the efforts of Sen. E.J. Pipkin, the Eastern Shore Delegation, the State of Maryland and many others, will be another true emergency department when it opens as anticipated in 2010 near Grasonville.

The recently opened facility at Stevensville is not an Emergency Department, or "ER," as your headline states.

Rather, it is a medical office building and urgent care facility (as the text of the story states), much like a regular primary care physician's office, available for walk in care instead of appointments.

It might have been perfectly appropriate for the patient's care in this situation— but it is not an "ER."

I point this out because I have heard of cases in which people with life-threatening illnesses have driven themselves to the Stevensville facility, mistakenly believing it is an emergency room, only to then be taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital for the appropriate emergent treatment.

This situation can cost people valuable time in getting appropriate care and it hampers the lifesaving efforts of the local ambulance and EMS providers.

Therefore, it is important for the public to accurately understand what is and is not an "ER."

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