



Abstract

Nationally, the use of emergency department services steadily increased from 365 per 1,000 persons in 1999 to 405 per 1,000 persons in 2008, even though the number of emergency departments has decreased (<http://www.aha.org/aha/trendwatch/chartbook/2011/table3-3.pdf>). This upsurge in emergency department use is a growing financial concern, since emergency departments are required to provide some type of care to all patients even those who are uninsured and have no means of paying for the service. To better understand the unique role emergency departments play in the state, this report summarizes 2008 Tennessee hospital emergency department data by type of admission, gender, race, patient age, source of payment, and first listed diagnosis.

Methods

The comprehensive *Tennessee Hospital Discharge Data System (HDDS)* is maintained by the Tennessee Department of Health and contains information about hospital inpatient and outpatient (emergency department, day surgeries, and 23-hour observations) services. This report focuses on hospital visits, both inpatient and outpatient, that involved Tennessee emergency room services. Data from nonfederal, short-term hospitals where the average stay is less than 30 days were included. Psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities, which do not provide emergency or acute care, were excluded. Federal facilities are not required to report services and were also excluded. All visits, those by Tennessee residents and nonresidents, were included.

While Tennessee was one of only nine states that collected emergency department information before 1999, the data gathered changed significantly mid 2007. At that time, Tennessee started collecting data for 18 diagnoses (compared to nine previously) and three external causes of injury (compared to one previously). Data for 2008 represents the state's first full year of data in this new format.

Description of the Emergency Department Report

Growing concerns about the potential overuse of emergency department services, especially by the uninsured, prompted a closer look at hospital utilization in Tennessee. First, it is important to recognize there are two ways a person can use emergency department services. One way is to seek emergency department care where all needs are met, no additional services are needed, and the patient is discharged. Another way is to seek emergency department care but require additional services, extending the hospital visit into an inpatient stay. For this report, both emergency department only visits and emergency department visits resulting in inpatient stays are given. Tennessee shares borders with eight other states, so to understand the full burden Tennessee hospitals carry, this report evaluated how residents as well as nonresidents utilize Tennessee hospitals.

Use of Hospital Emergency Department Data

To see the hospital emergency department data table for one of the eight listed categories in this report, click anywhere on the line containing the selected report.

Tennessee Hospital Emergency Department Visits 2008
1. Number of Inpatient Discharges and Outpatient Visits, With Emergency Department Services by Resident Status
2. Number of Inpatient Discharges and Outpatient Visits, With Emergency Department Services by Type of Admission
3. Number of Inpatient Discharges and Outpatient Visits, With Emergency Department Services, by Gender
4. Number of Inpatient Discharges and Outpatient Visits, With Emergency Department Services, by Race
5. Number of Inpatient Discharges With Emergency Department Services, by Primary Payer Source and Age
6. Number of Outpatient Visits With Emergency Department Services, by Primary Payer Source and Age
7. Number of Inpatient Discharges With Emergency Department Services, by First Listed Diagnosis and Age
8. Number of Outpatient Visits With Emergency Department Services, by First Listed Diagnosis and Age

Additional data may be obtained by contacting the Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Policy, Planning and Assessment, Tennessee Hospital Discharge Data Andrew Johnson Tower, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee.



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