

Emergency Department Visits for Violence Among Women of Reproductive Age

What is ESSENCE?

ESSENCE stands for Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics. It collects data in near real-time from emergency departments (ED) across the state. We use syndromes (collections of symptoms) in ESSENCE to search chief complaint and discharge diagnosis data in order to detect and monitor diseases and conditions. This means of monitoring trends and identifying emerging issues is called syndromic surveillance.

Purpose of this Report:

The objective of this report is to monitor trends in ED visits for violence among women of reproductive age. It is one of several means of surveillance of risk factors for homicide and suicide deaths among pregnant and postpartum women in Tennessee (TN).

Notes and Limitations:

All syndromic definitions were developed by CDC. Because perpetrator information is not often included in ED visit data, IPV-related ED visits may be under-estimated. Syndromic surveillance only captures individuals who seek medical care for a condition or injury, and thus only represents a portion of all individuals experiencing these conditions. For this reason, ESSENCE is just one tool in our toolbox to understand these public health issues and to identify opportunities for prevention and intervention.

For more information:

- [Prevention of Violent Maternal Deaths in TN](#)
- [Maternal Health Innovation in TN](#)
- [Maternal Mortality Review in TN](#)

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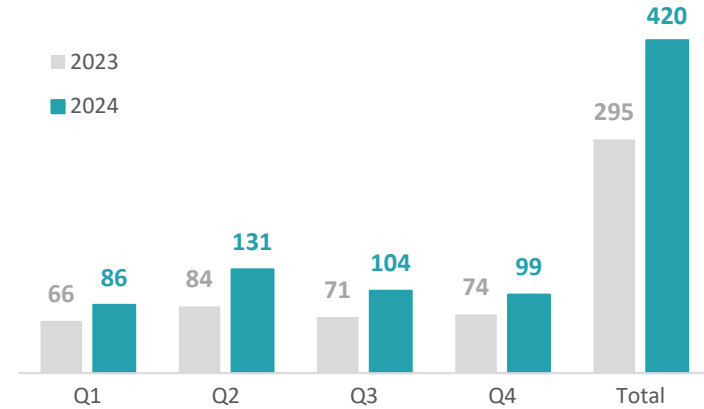


ESSENCE Report: ED Visits for Violence Among Women of Reproductive Age (15-44)

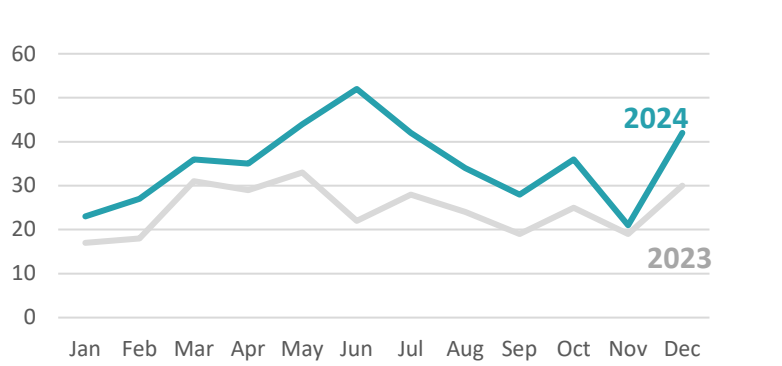
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

October – December 2024 (Q4)

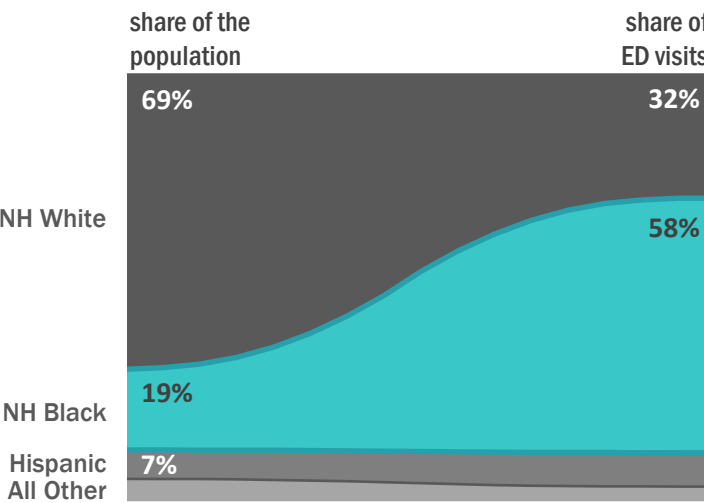
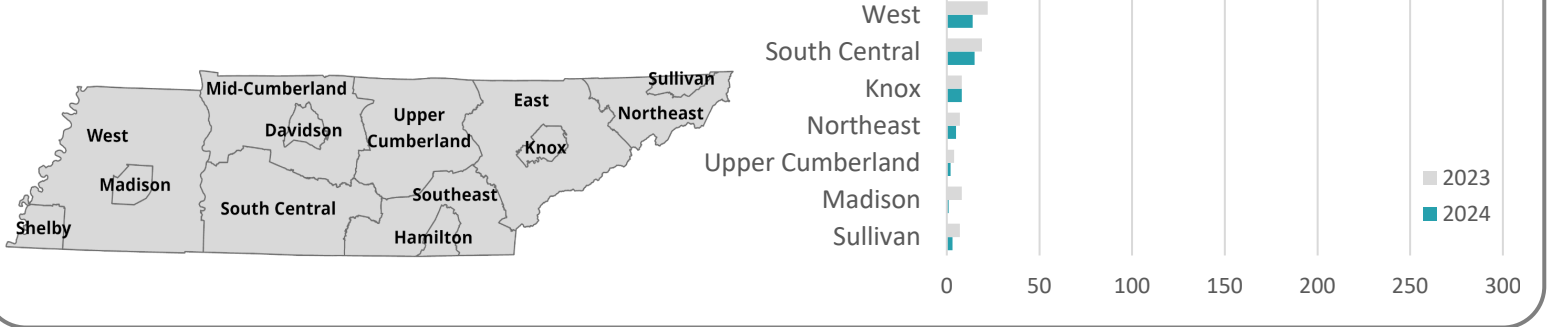
The count of IPV-related ED visits is **34% higher** in Q4 2024 compared to Q4 2023.



Monthly counts of IPV-related ED visits in 2024 increased in October, dropped in November, and spiked in December indicating a year-end surge.



The number of IPV-related ED visits in **Shelby County** for Q1-Q4 2024 is **161% higher** than in 2023. The **East** and **Southeast** regions have also had increases (46% and 33% respectively)



During Q1-Q4 2024, **Non-Hispanic Black females continue to be overrepresented** in IPV-related ED visits, accounting for 58% of visits while representing just 19% of the population.

When examining IPV-related ED visits by age (data not shown), females aged 20-34 account for 65% of visits while accounting for just 52% of the population of women of reproductive age.

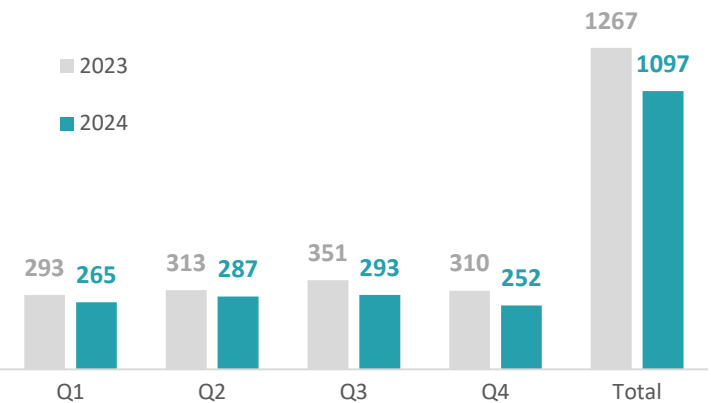
IPV is abuse or aggression in a romantic relationship. “Intimate partner” refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners. Types of IPV include physical and sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression. IPV can range in frequency and severity and even one episode can have a lasting impact.

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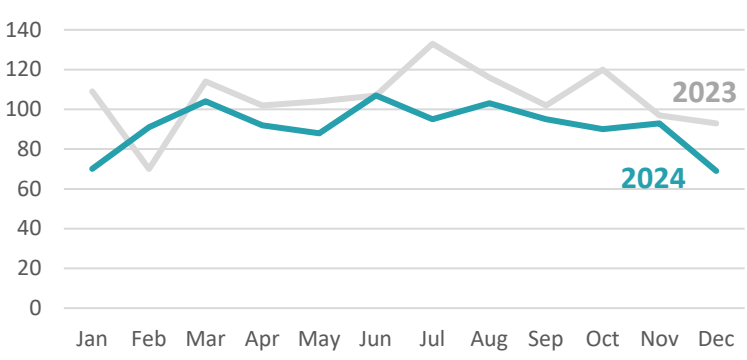
Sexual Violence (SV)

October – December 2024 (Q4)

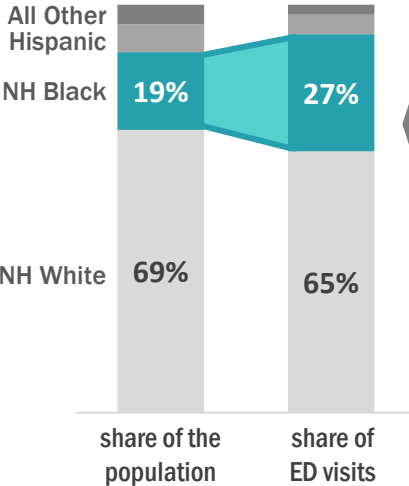
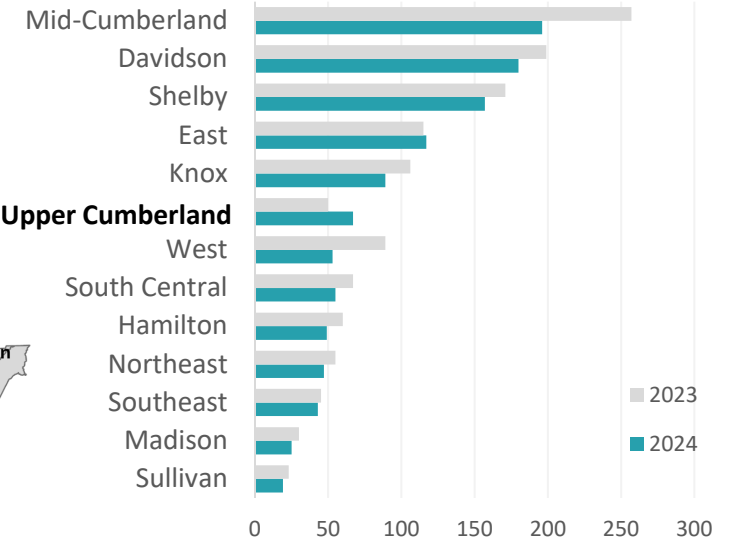
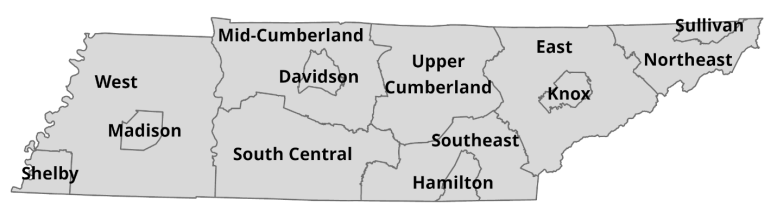
The count of SV-related ED visits is **19% lower** in Q4 2024 compared to Q4 2023.



Although SV-related ED visits fluctuated in 2024, they remained stable in October and November before sharply declining in December.

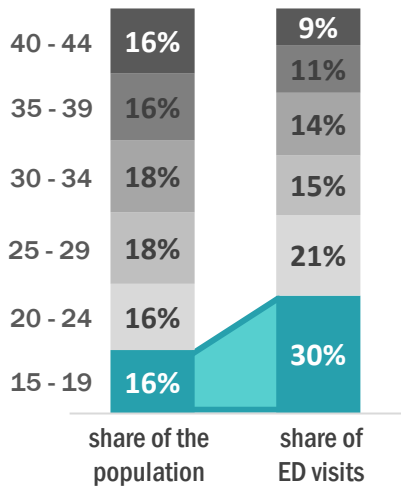


Statewide SV-related ED visits in Q4 2024 have declined 13% compared to Q4 2023. Mid-Cumberland was still reporting the highest counts but had a 24% drop, contributing significantly to the decline. Meanwhile, **Upper Cumberland increased by 34%**, while West experienced the largest reduction at 40%.



The distribution of SV-related ED visits by race and ethnicity has remained similar in 2024 compared to 2023. **Non-Hispanic Black females continue to be overrepresented**, accounting for 27% of visits while representing just 19% of the population.

The distribution of SV-related ED visits by age has remained similar in 2024 compared to 2023. **Females aged 15-19 are overrepresented**, accounting for 30% of visits while representing just 16% of the population.

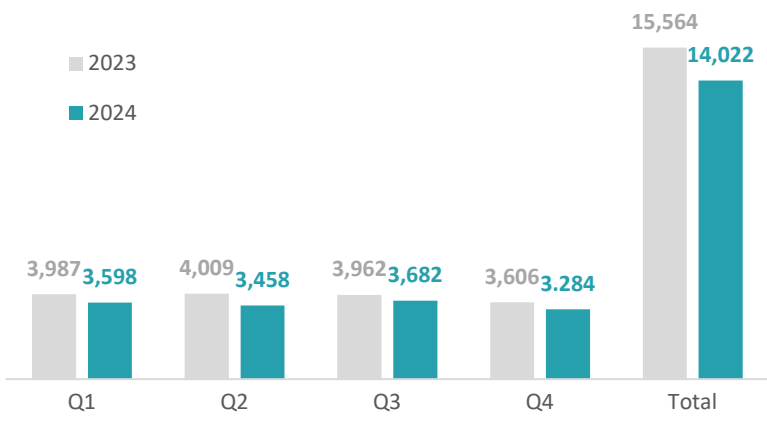


SV is any sexual activity or act in which consent is not obtained or freely given. Types of SV include sexual abuse, coercion, and assault, and rape. SV can occur in person or through technology, such as sharing unsolicited sexual pictures or non-consensual sexting.

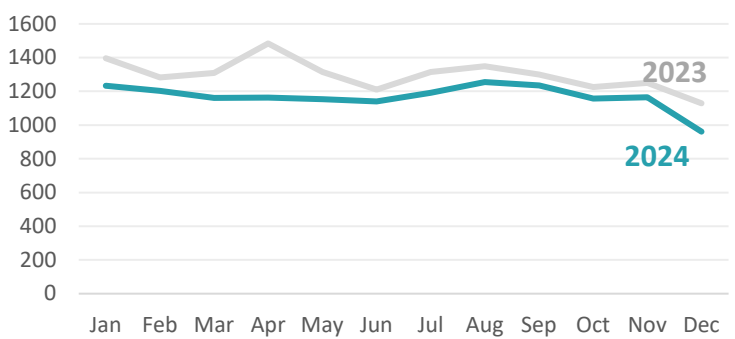
Suicide Ideation/Attempt (SIA)

October – December 2024 (Q4)

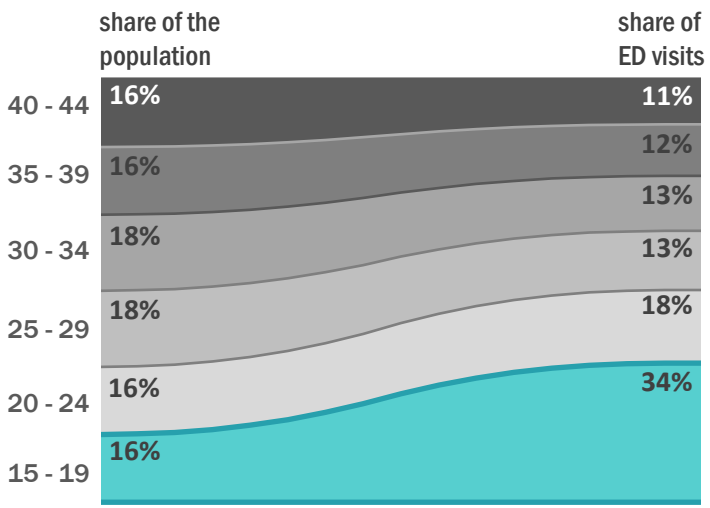
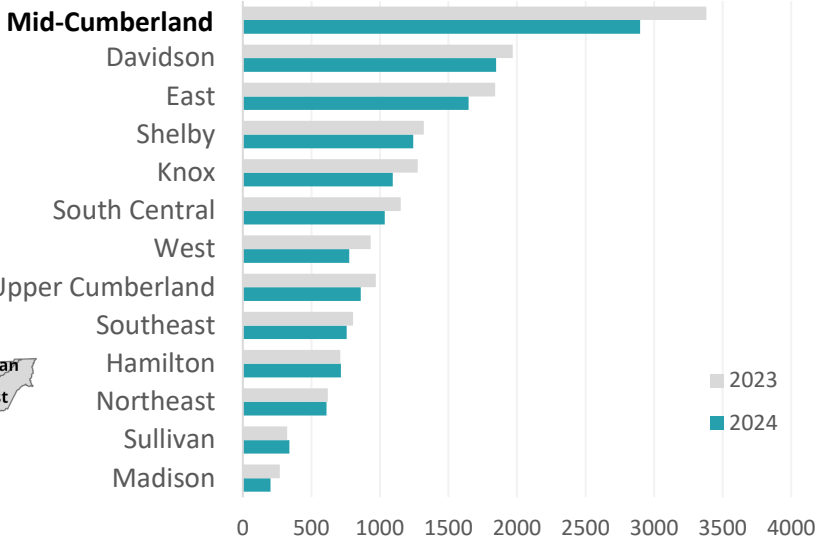
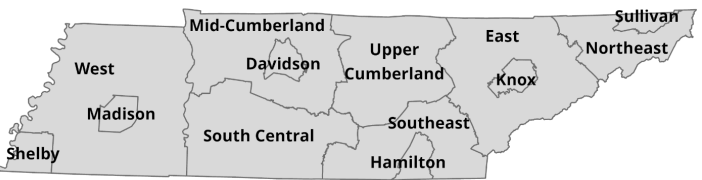
The count of SIA-related ED visits is **9% lower** in Q4 2024 compared to Q4 2023.



In Q4 2024, SV-related ED visits remained stable through October and November before dropping sharply in December, continuing the downward trend from earlier in the year.



Compared to Q1-Q4 2023, SIA-related ED visits are lower across most regions in 2024, with a 10% statewide decline. **Mid-Cumberland** remains the **highest**, though visits there have decreased by 14%. The largest decrease occurred in Madison County (25%).



The distribution of SIA-related ED visits by age has remained similar in 2024 compared to 2023. Females aged **15-19** are **overrepresented**, accounting for 34% of visits while representing just 16% of the population.

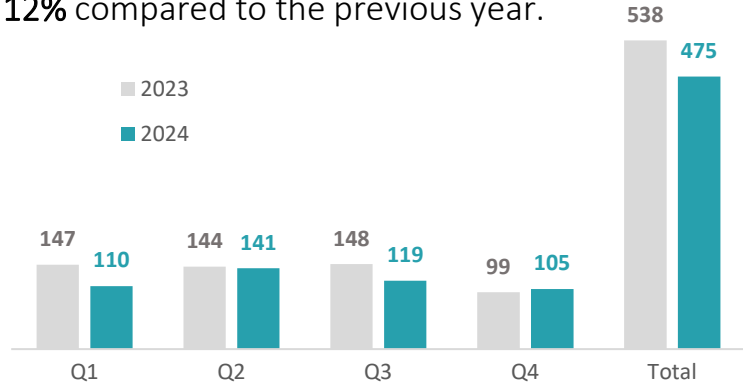
The distribution of SIA-related ED visits by race and ethnicity (data not shown) is similar to the population distribution.

Suicide ideation is a broad term used to describe a range of contemplations, wishes, and preoccupations with death and suicide. Suicide attempt is when an individual harms themselves with the goal of ending their life, but they do not die.

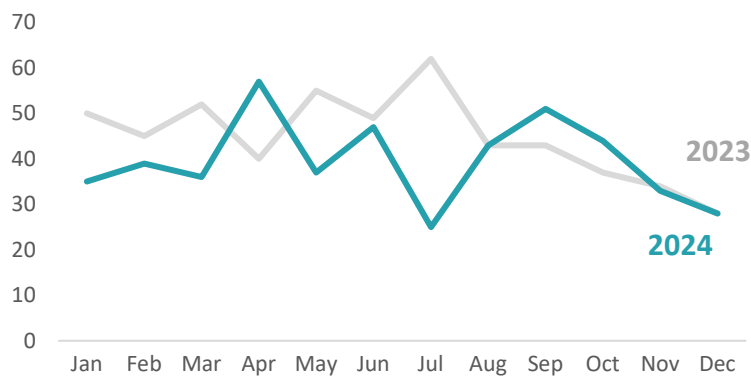
Firearm Injury (FI)

October – December 2024 (Q4)

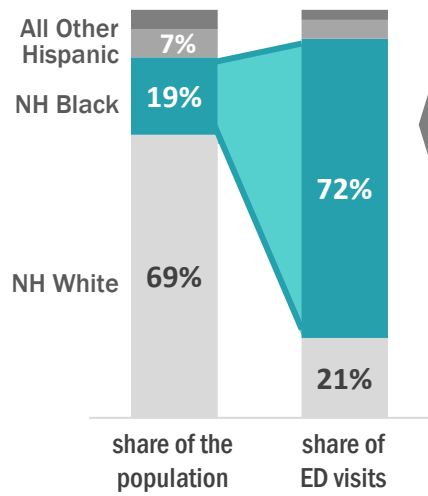
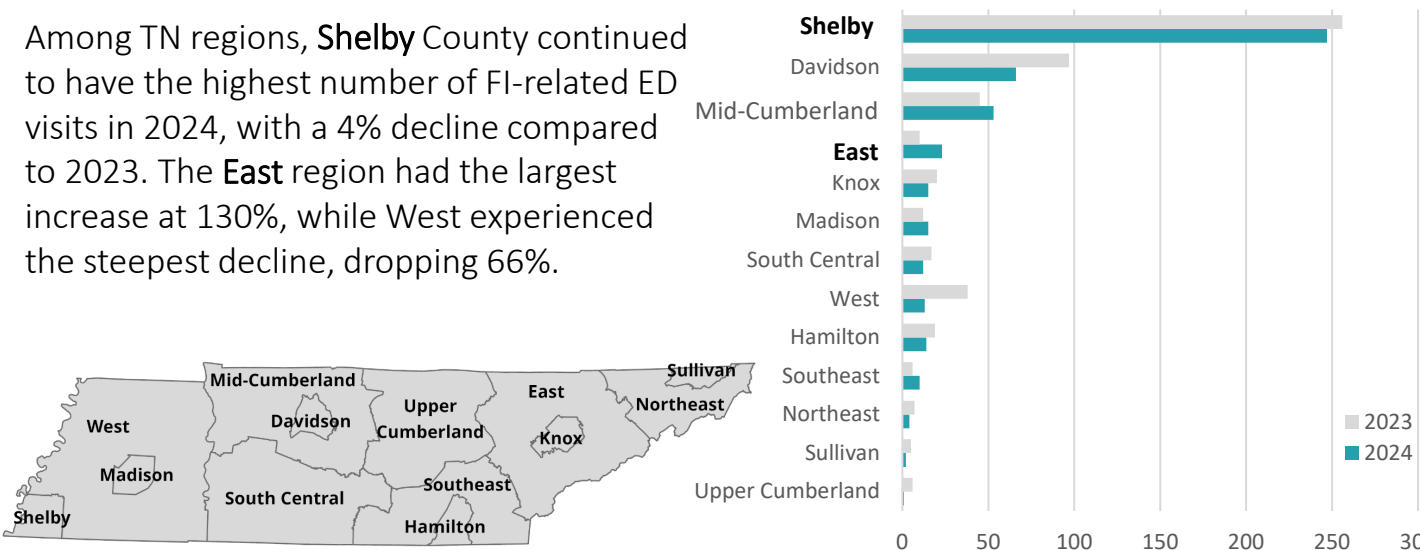
The count of FI-related ED visits in Q4 2024 showed a **6% increase** compared to that of Q4 2023, while the total visits in 2024 **decreased by 12%** compared to the previous year.



In Q4 2024, FI-related ED visits declined in November and December, reaching one of the lowest points of the year.

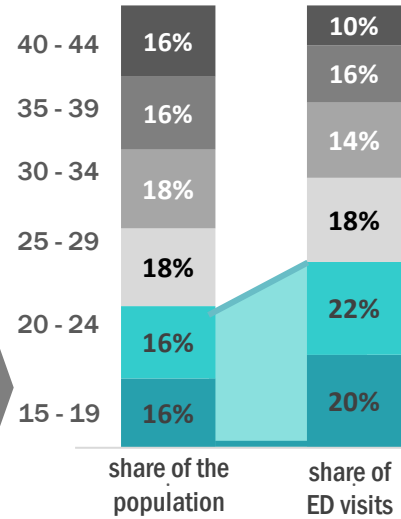


Among TN regions, **Shelby** County continued to have the highest number of FI-related ED visits in 2024, with a 4% decline compared to 2023. The **East** region had the largest increase at 130%, while West experienced the steepest decline, dropping 66%.



The distribution of FI-related ED visits by race and ethnicity was similar in Q1-Q4 2024 compared to 2023. **Non-Hispanic Black females continue to be overrepresented**, accounting for 72% of visits while representing just 19% of the population.

The distribution of FI-related ED visits by age was similar in Q1-Q4 2024 compared to 2023. **Females aged 15-24 are overrepresented**, accounting for 42% of visits while representing just 32% of the population.



FI is a wound from a weapon that uses a powder charge to fire a projectile (e.g. handguns and shotguns). FI can be intentional or unintentional. Some circumstances include mishandling, suicide, assault, or during legal intervention.