



## Health Analytics and Vital Records

Division of Public Health

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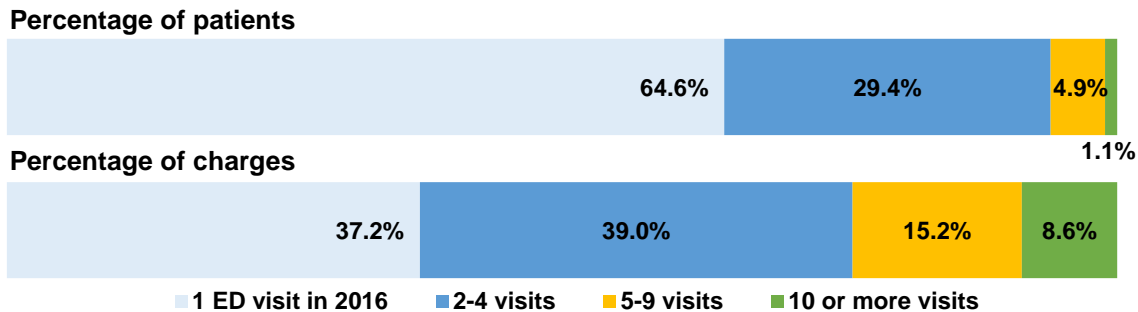
# Alaska Facts and Figures

## 2016 Emergency Department Super-utilizer Facts

At least 110,942 unique patients visited the Emergency Department (ED) in 2016, or about one in seven Alaskans.<sup>1</sup> This accounts for a total of 204,880 visits and total billed charges of \$621,576,853. Hospitals report data on emergency department and other hospitalizations to the Division of Public Health through the Health Facilities Data Reporting program.<sup>2</sup>

Most patients (64.6%) only visited the ED one time during the year, and 94% of patients visited four or fewer times. Patients who visited the ED five or more times in a calendar year, sometimes referred to as “super-utilizers,” made up 6% (6,651) of patients. The top 1.1% (1,216) most frequent ED users each visited the ED at least 10 times in 2016. Eight individual patients each had over 50 visits during the year, and 95 patients had at least 25 visits.

Individuals who use the ED frequently contribute disproportionately to total charges. The top 1.1% of users account for 8.6% of charges (\$53 million), and the top 6% of users account for 23.8% of charges (\$148 million).



Mean charges per visit were \$3,225 for patients who went to the ED only one time in the year. For patients with two or more ED visits in the year, mean charges per visit were \$2,931.

The most common principal diagnoses among the top 1.1% of patients were alcohol-related disorders, abdominal and pelvic pain, pain in throat and chest, dorsalgia (back pain), pain not elsewhere classified, other joint disorder, nausea and vomiting, and anxiety disorders.

The following comparisons are between the general ED population (all patients, all visits) and the 1,216 patients who each visited the ED 10 or more times during the year.

The overall ED patient population was 54% female and 46% male, while the top 1% of ED patients was 58.1% female and 41.9% male.

In both the overall ED population and the top 1.1% of users, the most common times of day were between 2 p.m. and 9 p.m., with usage peaking at 5-6 p.m. The least frequent times of day among both groups were between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m., dipping to the lowest at 5 a.m. Neither group shows much use variation between days of the week.

<sup>1</sup> Hospitals reported a total of 241,493 ED visits in 2016. Records are given a unique patient identifier in place of SSN. In about 30,000 records (12.6%), SSN was not reported, so we are not able to count repeat visits among those records. Among the 211,073 records with a patient identifier, we can identify 110,942 unique patients.

<sup>2</sup> 2016 data are provisional. Four hospitals have yet to report data and are not included here: Alaska Native Medical Center, PeaceHealth Ketchikan, Norton Sound, and Mt. Edgecumbe.

