

Massachusetts Acute Care Hospital Emergency Department Data— Quarterly Update

October 2019 through June 2025 (Preliminary)

Introduction

The Massachusetts Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) provides analyses of health system utilization to inform payers, providers, policymakers, and the public. Emergency departments (EDs) serve a vital role in the Massachusetts health care system. To better understand trends in ED utilization, CHIA has analyzed ED visits at all acute care hospitals in Massachusetts quarterly from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019 through the third quarter of FFY 2025 (October 2019 through June 2025). Results and graphic visualizations from this analysis are presented in an [interactive dashboard](#) available on the CHIA website. It is accompanied by a [databook](#) with more detailed analyses and a [technical appendix](#).

The data source for the dashboard and databook is CHIA's Emergency Department Database (EDD), which consists of ED visits from all acute care hospitals in Massachusetts resulting in neither an inpatient admission nor an observation stay (treat-and-release visit). This dashboard presents analyses on a quarterly basis on measures of ED utilization and visit characteristics at a statewide level and for select analyses at the hospital level. The data in the quarterly updates is preliminary, with the primary purpose of this series to provide timely patterns and trends on key ED utilization measures. The dashboard and databook are updated quarterly with more complete data as it becomes available and as CHIA continues to work with providers to process and confirm data submissions through the annual data collection process.

In the November 2025 quarterly update, data on statewide visits and average length of stay by hospital system for FFY 2025 reflects the Steward Health Care bankruptcy filing in May 2024 and the sale and transfer of control of 5 of its acute care hospitals. More information is available in the [technical appendix](#). Data from FFY 2016-2019 (October 2015-September 2019) is not displayed in the dashboard but can still be found in [legacy databook](#).

Key Findings From the November 2025 Update

- Overall treat-and-release emergency department average length of stay (ALOS) statewide continues to decrease following highs observed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ALOS for behavioral health-related emergency department visits continues to decrease from earlier years. Between April and June 2025, the ALOS for visits with a primary diagnosis related to behavioral health decreased to approximately 11 hours for the first time since December 2019.

About this Update

The quarterly dashboard includes data from October 2019 through June 2025. This update is organized in the following 9 sections:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| • Total Acute Care Volume | • Utilization by Hospital | • Diagnoses |
| • Statewide Utilization | • Visit Characteristics | • Behavioral Health |
| • Statewide Utilization by ZIP Code | • Excess Length of Stay | • COVID-19 |

Total Acute Care Volume

This section shows the total volume of acute care hospital visits and discharges in Massachusetts by Case Mix categorization. Discharges/visits are categorized by inpatient stay, outpatient observation, and ED treat and release.

Statewide Utilization

The utilization section presents the total number of ED visits and the average length of stay for ED visits statewide and by hospital characteristics. Hospital characteristics include hospital cohort, high public payer status, trauma designation, and hospital system.

Statewide Utilization by ZIP Code

This map shows statewide utilization patterns by patient ZIP Code of residence. The map shows both the number of ED visits and the rate of visits per 100 residents in percentiles by ZIP Code. Locations of emergency departments were added to the map as part of the February 2024 update. Measures are shown for all ED visits across Massachusetts on a yearly basis for FFY 2019-2024. This section does not include preliminary data.

Utilization by Hospital

This section presents hospital-level ED utilization measures on a quarterly basis for all acute care hospitals in Massachusetts. The measures included are total visits and average length of stay.

Visit Characteristics

This section shows statewide utilization patterns and average length of stay by ED visit characteristics, including age group, sex, race/ethnicity, and primary payer type.

Excess Length of Stay

This section shows visits with longer-than-average length of stay for visits associated with a primary behavioral health diagnosis, those not related to behavioral health, and all visits at the statewide level. The dashboard includes 4 thresholds to categorize excess length of stay (4, 6, 12, and 24 hours).

Diagnoses

This section presents common primary diagnoses associated with ED visits by age group at a statewide level. Additionally, the average length of stay for each of these primary diagnosis categories is provided.

Behavioral Health

This section shows total visits and average length of stay for ED visits associated with any behavioral health condition and by specific behavioral health diagnosis categories. These estimates are presented for all ED visits statewide and by age group.

COVID-19

This section shows statewide utilization patterns for ED visits associated and not associated with COVID-19 by patient and visit characteristics, including primary payer type, age group, sex, and race/ethnicity. The measures included are total visits, percent of total visits, and average length of stay.

For more information, please contact:



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