CHIA.

# Massachusetts Acute Care Hospital Emergency Department Data— Quarterly Update

## October 2018 through March 2024 (Preliminary)

### Introduction

Emergency departments (EDs) serve a vital role in the Massachusetts health care system. To better understand trends in ED utilization, the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) has analyzed ED treat-and-release visits (visits that result in neither an inpatient nor observation stay) in all acute care hospitals in Massachusetts quarterly from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 through the second quarter of FFY 2024 (October 2018-March 2024). 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 August 2024 quarterly update includes a new section on total volume of acute care hospital visits and discharges categorized by inpatient stay, outpatient observation, and emergency department (ED) treat-and-release visits.

The data source for the dashboard and databook is CHIA's Emergency Department Database (EDD), consisting of ED visits from all acute care hospitals in Massachusetts resulting in neither an inpatient admission nor an observation stay (treat-and-release visits). 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 quarterly updates are preliminary, with the primary purpose of this series to provide timely patterns and trends on key ED utilization measures. The dashboard and databook will be updated quarterly with more complete data as they become available and as CHIA continues to work with providers to process and confirm data submissions through the data collection process.

The quarterly dashboard includes data from October 2018 to March 2024. This update is organized in the following nine sections:

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

### 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, race/ethnicity, age group, sex, and expected primary payer type.

### Statewide Utilization by ZIP Code
This map shows statewide utilization patterns by patient ZIP Code of residence. The map shows both the number of emergency department 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 emergency department visits across Massachusetts on a yearly basis for FFY 2019-2023. This section does not use 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 the age group, sex, and race/ethnicity of the patient as well as the expected primary payer type.

### Excess Length of Stay
This section shows visits with longer than average length of stay for visits associated with behavioral health visits, non-behavioral health-related visits, and all visits at the statewide level. The dashboard includes four different 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 COVID-19-associated ED visits and ED visits not associated with COVID-19 by patient and visit characteristics, including expected primary payer type, age group, sex, and race/ethnicity. The measures included are total visits, percent of total visits, and average length of stay.

### 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 emergency department (ED) treat-and-release.

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