

## 12 days of trauma may break the bank for most, says trauma chief

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Americans are reporting they plan to spend an average of \$854 this year on holiday gifts, but that is pennies compared with the cost of an unplanned trip to the Emergency Department.

"Drinking and fighting during the holidays are two primary factors that drive up encounters with Loyola's [Trauma](#) Center and the cost can be financially, physically and emotionally staggering," said Dr. Thomas Esposito, chief of the Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care and Burns in the Department of Surgery at Loyola University Medical Center. "The small cost of consuming several drinks or buying some bullets to load your gun can escalate into the astronomical price of an injury that could effectively cost you your life and your loved ones their life savings."

Dr. Esposito tallied up the cost of some common holiday injuries he sees in the Loyola Trauma program to the tune of that popular holiday song. "On the 12 days of Christmas, or any time of the year, we'd like to see no money spent on injury care—but only on safe and fun things," said Esposito, who often is on-call during the holiday season.

The representative cases which follow were chosen randomly from Loyola's trauma patient database and each dollar amount shown is the total for that number of cases with each type of injury. Those totals include the usual and customary charges for services and supplies such as drugs, hospital room and procedures, among others.

### Cost of Loyola's 12 Days of Holiday Trauma:

- 12 Trauma Patients - \$9, 924,347.79
- 11 Bones-a-Broken - \$7, 271,721.49
- 10 Traffic Tragedies - \$1,857,479.59
- 9 Knifed Warriors - \$2,210,873.50
- 8 Skaters Skating - \$216,982.69
- 7 Shattered Spleens - \$2,762,241.59
- 6 From a Shooting - \$3,242,682.19
- 5 Fighting Fools - \$1,451,462.25
- 4 Females Falling - \$2,972,196.99
- 3 Twisted Knees - \$294,954.03
- 2 Frostbit Toes - \$289,931.11
- . . . and one Long-Term [Brain Injury](#) - \$702,096.59

"The cost to an individual and their family is heartbreaking, but the cost to public health is bank-breaking," said Esposito, who has cared for [trauma patients](#) at Loyola for more than two decades. The Chicago area, where Esposito is a trauma surgeon, continues to lead the country in gun violence. "Just last weekend someone went to a party, things got out of hand and they pulled out a gun and started shooting," Esposito said. "I say don't pack heat this winter. Bring a poinsettia, not a pistol to a party."

Loyola is the only Level 1 Trauma Center in Illinois verified by the American College of Surgeons. A Level 1 [Trauma Center](#) is equipped to provide comprehensive emergency medical services to patients suffering traumatic injuries of any degree of severity - car and motorcycle crashes, stabbings, shootings, athletic injuries, falls - using multidisciplinary treatment and specialized resources, Esposito said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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