

ACEP: Emergency care benefits with health insurance exchange

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(HealthDay)—Use of a health insurance exchange (HIE) can reduce costs of care and improve quality of care in an emergency setting, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Emergency Physicians, held from Oct. 14 to 17 in Seattle.

Steven H. Saef, M.D., from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, and colleagues estimated the impact of an HIE on emergency department care in four major hospital systems. Emergency department clinicians from 11 emergency departments were surveyed to examine whether information obtained from an HIE avoided resource use while caring for patients.

During the 12-month study period, there were 325,740 patient encounters and 7,525 logons to the HIE by 231 [emergency department](#) physicians. Based on 532 surveys, the researchers found that various

services and charges were avoided, including laboratory/microbiology, radiology, consultations, and hospital admissions. The total charges avoided were \$1,035,654, representing an average of \$1,947 per patient. About one-third of participants (32.2 percent) reported changes in management other than avoidance of service. For most patients (89 percent) with information in the HIE, the quality of care was improved, and 82 percent reported that time was saved (mean, 105 minutes).

"As [emergency](#) physicians, we are dedicated to improving care for our patients and also to reducing [health care costs](#). This study shows we can do both," Saef said in a statement.

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