

2006 to 2015 saw decrease in Medicare beneficiary ICU use

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(HealthDay)—From 2006 to 2015, there was a significant decrease in

intensive care unit (ICU) admissions among Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries, according to a research letter published online Oct. 15 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Gary E. Weissman, M.D., from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and colleagues used data from the Medicare Provider Analysis and Review file to assess hospitalizations involving acute and ICU care between 2006 and 2015 for Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries (aged 65 years or older).

The researchers observed a decrease in the ICU admission rate, from 6,117 per 100,000 person-years in 2006 to 4,247 per 100,000 person-years in 2015. During this period, there was also a decrease in the proportion of hospitalizations that included ICU care, from 17 to 16.3 percent. There was a nearly threefold difference among state-level ICU admission rates in 2015, varying from 2,117 per 100,000 person-years in Hawaii to 6,312 per 100,000 person-years in Mississippi. In all states except Nebraska, ICU admission rates decreased. The national ICU bed count increased 11.4 percent between 2006 and 2015, with variation between states; there was no correlation between the percentage change in ICU beds and [admission](#) across states.

"The United States has more ICU beds per capita than many peer nations; however, bed availability is not the sole driver of ICU admissions and its effects also vary across states," the authors write.

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