

## Health enterprise zone initiative cut hospitalizations, costs

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(HealthDay)—Maryland's Health Enterprise Zone Initiative reduced

hospitalizations and led to net cost savings, according to a study published in the October issue of *Health Affairs*.

Darrell J. Gaskin, Ph.D., from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues evaluated outcomes associated with Maryland's Health Enterprise Zone Initiative. The authors used state data on hospital inpatient stays and readmissions, as well as emergency department visits (2013 through 2016) to compare trends in these measures for people in 16 zip codes covered by the Health Enterprise Zone Initiative and in 94 zip codes that were not covered but met the criteria for the initiative.

The researchers found that the initiative was associated with a reduction of 18,562 inpatient stays but an increase of 40,488 emergency department visits from 2013 to 2016. The authors suggest that the rise in emergency department visits may be due to the fact that hospitals were more likely to send [emergency department](#) patients home instead of admitting them because the patients had access to resources via the initiative. The cost savings associated with reduced inpatient stays (\$168.4 million) outweighed the initiative's cost to the state (\$15.1 million), yielding a net savings of \$108.5 million.

"Policymakers should consider extending the Health Enterprise Zones to other eligible communities," Gaskin said in a statement.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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