

CDC: Patients frequently choose ERs further from home

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"If the demand for emergency care continues to grow, understanding the circumstances in which patients visit an [emergency department](#) other than the one closest to their home may become increasingly important," the authors write.

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(HealthDay)—Less than half of all emergency department visits occur at the emergency department closest to a patient's home, according to a March data brief published by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Amy M. Brown, M.P.H., from the NCHS in Hyattsville, Md., and colleagues examined which emergency department [patients](#) visit, how often patients visit the emergency department closest to their home, and the factors associated with emergency department selection patterns.

The researchers found that visits to emergency departments occurred an average of 6.8 miles from the patient's residence in 2009 to 2010, while the nearest emergency department was 3.9 miles from home. Less than half of all visits (43.8 percent) occurred at the emergency department closest to the patient's home. Compared with visits outside of metropolitan statistical areas, visits within metropolitan statistical areas were less likely to occur at the emergency department closest to home (37.2 versus 70.1 percent). Visits that did not take place at the closest emergency department occurred more often for older patients, at larger hospitals, and in emergency departments with longer waiting times within metropolitan statistical areas.

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