

IT'S AN **EMERGENCY!**

TOO MANY OHIOANS GO
TO EMERGENCY ROOMS FOR
ORAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS



SEPTEMBER 2014

Dental Access Now 
Bringing quality dental care to every community •

INTRODUCTION

WHEN YOU THINK OF AN EMERGENCY ROOM, DOES A DENTIST COME TO MIND? NOT LIKELY. BUT FOR TOO MANY OHIOANS WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO REGULAR ORAL HEALTH CARE, THE EMERGENCY ROOM MAY BE THE ONLY PLACE TO GO WHEN TOOTH PAIN IS UNBEARABLE.

A study using data from 1997 to 2007 and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that emergency rooms are increasingly serving as the safety net in our health care system. Emergency rooms are being used as a safety net for dental care too.

Ohioans without access to regular dental care are using emergency rooms to treat dental issues. And many emergency departments lack dental services and do not provide definitive care – they only treat the symptoms with prescriptions for pain medicine and antibiotics. With only the symptoms addressed, people are referred to an already overburdened dental care safety net system. When they are unable to get treatment for the underlying disease, many return to the emergency room.

The cost for treating oral health issues in the emergency room is much more expensive than treating them in a primary care setting. According to the Ohio Department of Health, in 2010 and the first half of 2011, dental treatment in emergency rooms cost \$188.5 million. Emergency room visits with a primary dental diagnosis cost more than \$58 million.



Emergency room use is an issue in all parts of our state.

In southwest Ohio, dental issues are the top reasons people with Medicaid coverage go to the emergency room, mostly for unbearable pain. Some emergency room users say they have no dentist or they have barriers to get to a dentist.

In Franklin County, of the top 20 diagnoses for low-income resident visits to the emergency room, four are dental related. And, most of these can appropriately be seen in a dentist's office or a primary care setting.

In central Ohio, neighborhoods in which there are not enough dentists to serve the population have higher rates of emergency room usage—up to eight percent of all emergency room diagnoses for those covered by Medicaid or uninsured.

Too many Ohioans lack access to nearby affordable dental care. The lack of access to regular dental care is being played out in emergency rooms across the state at a high cost. Better access to dental care will make Ohioans healthier—and that is good for the bottom line.



State of Ohio

Ohioans without access to regular dental care are using emergency rooms to treat dental pain and suffering. Many emergency departments lack dental services, do not provide definitive care, only treat the symptoms and make referrals out to an already overburdened dental care safety net system. When the problem is not resolved, many patients return to the emergency room to treat the symptoms again as they try to find dental care in a strained dental care system.

One reason Ohioans may be using the emergency room is because they cannot find affordable dental care in their community. The state of Ohio has 84 federally designated dental health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). HPSAs may be urban or rural areas, population groups or medical

or other public facilities where there are too few dentists to serve the population. In addition to the 84 dental HPSAs, there are more communities that likely meet the criteria but have not applied for the designation.

Many of the visits to the emergency room were for issues that could be addressed in a dentist's office or clinic. Nearly 40% of visits were from cavities or abscesses, which are infections often stemming from untreated cavities.

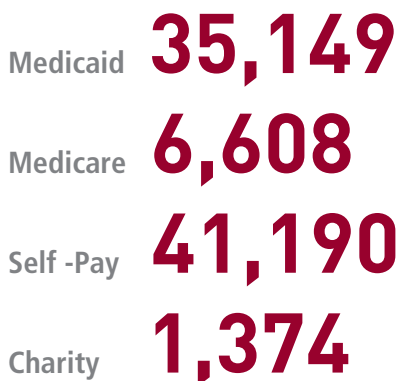
In 2011, more than 84,000 Ohioans who had public insurance or were uninsured went to hospital emergency rooms for dental problems.

NUMBER OF EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS FOR DENTAL PROBLEMS FOR PUBLICLY INSURED AND UNINSURED OHIOANS



Few dentists take Medicaid patients, leaving enrollees with few options. Uninsured Ohioans often cannot find or afford regular dental care.

EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS BY PAYER CODES (2011)



REASON FOR ER VISIT (2011)



SOURCES: Tang N, Stein J, Hsia RY, Maselli JH, Gonzales R. Trends and Characteristics of US Emergency Department Visits, 1997-2007. JAMA. 2010;304(6):664-670. doi:10.1001/jama.2010.1112.

Ohio Department of Health, Data Brief: Utilization of Ohio Emergency Departments to Treat Dental Problems, 2010-2011. www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/ohs/oral%20health/EDVisitDataBriefApril2013.ashx, April 2013.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Health Services Advisory Group, Inc., IMPROVE Statewide Collaborative. September 2010.

Central Ohio Hospital Council. OHA CYA09: Emergency/Fast Track: Indigent. Franklin County Hospitals.

Greater Dayton Hospital Association, Emergency Room data 2009, 2010, 2011. Analysis by UHCAN Ohio.

Emergency

Way

NUMBER OF EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS FOR DENTAL PROBLEMS FOR PUBLICLY INSURED AND UNINSURED

	2009	2010	2011
Ohio	84,964	84,023	84,325
Adams	136	120	120
Allen	1,554	2,034	2,026
Ashland	287	253	336
Ashtabula	1,320	1,612	1,465
Athens	268	309	318
Auglaize	281	276	317
Belmont	947	968	951
Brown	378	560	474
Butler	2,208	2,048	1,866
Carroll	65	50	67
Champaign	246	327	408
Clark	1,311	1,306	1,398
Clermont	1,686	2,082	2,400
Clinton	611	545	234
Columbiana	682	731	680
Coshocton	405	247	199
Crawford	459	406	375
Cuyahoga	8,740	9,179	9,029
Darke	192	103	119
Defiance	318	422	399
Delaware	251	250	295
Erie	666	557	793
Fairfield	921	928	821
Fayette	419	330	188
Franklin	9,003	9,283	9,811
Fulton	177	186	184
Gallia	905	702	618
Geauga	100	111	132
Greene	832	505	416
Guernsey	428	408	412
Hamilton	5,769	5,583	6,519
Hancock	265	278	320
Hardin	454	426	383
Harrison	102	96	98
Henry	169	114	147
Highland	441	478	414
Hocking	460	466	386
Holmes	209	191	209
Huron	628	583	767
Jackson	287	634	492
Jefferson	1,205	1,235	969
Knox	527	494	525
Lake	731	625	838
Lawrence	187	161	96

	2009	2010	2011
Licking	798	798	827
Logan	489	466	512
Lorain	2461	2,740	2,518
Lucas	5,243	4,956	5,310
Madison	223	270	271
Mahoning	1,705	1,617	1,451
Marion	703	735	578
Medina	710	651	662
Meigs	126	117	124
Mercer	141	188	137
Miami	466	462	432
Monroe	28	59	44
Montgomery	3,956	2,646	2,708
Morgan	43	61	51
Morrow	280	251	211
Muskingum	900	792	974
Noble	41	47	58
Ottawa	236	231	287
Paulding	91	116	92
Perry	214	252	215
Pickaway	414	342	384
Pike	377	326	357
Portage	478	488	442
Preble	125	82	72
Putnam	152	131	109
Richland	1,510	1,413	1,043
Ross	704	732	684
Sandusky	255	296	365
Scioto	1,234	574	566
Seneca	670	616	629
Shelby	297	318	230
Stark	3,096	2,936	2,741
Summit	4,093	4,439	4,265
Trumbull	1,645	1,743	1,694
Tuscarawas	497	411	544
Union	72	55	110
Van Wert	424	413	367
Vinton	142	172	152
Warren	658	527	465
Washington	208	380	527
Wayne	842	1,003	1,031
Williams	249	286	290
Wood	619	580	662
Wyandot	119	103	120
	84,964	84,023	84,325

EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS BY PAYER, 2011

	Medicaid	Medicare	Self-Pay	Charity
Ohio	35,149	6,608	41,190	1,374
Adams	60	13	37	10
Allen	1,065	161	800	0
Ashland	158	21	157	0
Ashtabula	830	132	503	0
Athens	183	26	109	0
Auglaize	159	17	140	1
Belmont	495	70	380	6
Brown	213	21	139	101
Butler	727	125	989	25
Carroll	27	4	36	0
Champaign	189	28	191	0
Clark	571	66	761	0
Clermont	958	129	1,211	102
Clinton	134	19	78	3
Columbiana	233	212	235	0
Coshocton	136	18	45	0
Crawford	184	34	157	0
Cuyahoga	3,745	684	4,580	20
Darke	35	13	71	0
Defiance	196	74	129	0
Delaware	85	18	192	0
Erie	410	88	295	0
Fairfield	343	64	414	0
Fayette	95	76	17	0
Franklin	3,951	520	5,340	0
Fulton	73	24	87	0
Gallia	359	41	218	0
Geauga	42	10	80	0
Greene	101	47	258	10
Guernsey	198	22	192	0
Hamilton	2,687	456	3,119	257
Hancock	212	19	89	0
Hardin	188	20	175	0
Harrison	32	26	40	0
Henry	24	12	111	0
Highland	213	24	174	3
Hocking	182	30	174	0
Holmes	96	1	112	0
Huron	357	64	345	1
Jackson	227	33	232	0
Jefferson	515	75	379	0
Knox	261	31	232	1
Lake	361	72	405	0
Lawrence	34	3	59	0

	Medicaid	Medicare	Self-Pay	Charity
Licking	132	51	565	79
Logan	282	24	206	0
Lorain	940	175	1,403	0
Lucas	2,281	661	2,313	55
Madison	103	19	149	0
Mahoning	442	174	835	0
Marion	211	65	302	0
Medina	267	41	348	6
Meigs	74	12	38	0
Mercer	56	13	68	0
Miami	130	32	270	0
Monroe	19	4	21	0
Montgomery	807	198	1,701	2
Morgan	26	2	23	0
Morrow	86	15	110	0
Muskingum	544	63	367	0
Noble	31	4	23	0
Ottawa	149	30	108	0
Paulding	43	8	41	0
Perry	82	21	111	1
Pickaway	98	38	248	0
Pike	179	27	151	0
Portage	122	24	254	42
Preble	16	2	54	0
Putnam	49	8	52	0
Richland	527	52	464	0
Ross	312	57	315	0
Sandusky	169	21	175	0
Scioto	277	49	239	1
Seneca	253	69	307	0
Shelby	93	13	124	0
Stark	1,140	229	1,352	20
Summit	1,551	253	1,860	601
Trumbull	546	207	939	2
Tuscarawas	164	32	348	0
Union	78	9	23	0
Van Wert	220	25	122	0
Vinton	82	8	61	1
Warren	132	24	309	0
Washington	240	34	253	0
Wayne	436	68	504	23
Williams	125	26	135	0
Wood	244	60	357	1
Wyandot	47	18	55	0

Greater Dayton Hospital Association, Emergency Room Data 2009, 2010, 2011. Analysis by UHCAN Ohio.

REASON FOR EMERGENCY ROOM VISIT FOR DENTAL ISSUE, 2011

	Broken Tooth	Cavities	Dental Disorders	Abscess
Ohio	4,659	19,070	47,772	12,826
Adams	7	22	73	18
Allen	74	848	803	301
Ashland	9	112	181	34
Ashtabula	29	621	663	152
Athens	17	89	160	52
Auglaize	12	96	162	47
Belmont	28	142	686	95
Brown	14	91	304	65
Butler	106	381	934	445
Carroll	5	22	30	10
Champaign	11	87	275	35
Clark	96	469	591	242
Clermont	103	570	1,485	242
Clinton	16	35	112	71
Columbiana	37	106	345	192
Coshocton	4	28	115	52
Crawford	15	68	222	70
Cuyahoga	428	1,569	6,109	923
Darke	9	35	39	36
Defiance	25	167	157	50
Delaware	19	50	184	42
Erie	23	146	514	110
Fairfield	36	110	519	156
Fayette	11	23	131	23
Franklin	680	1,835	5,894	1,402
Fulton	17	51	78	38
Gallia	8	216	318	76
Geauga	7	47	59	19
Greene	57	114	157	88
Guernsey	22	10	346	34
Hamilton	418	1,170	3,924	1,007
Hancock	4	174	125	17
Hardin	11	131	203	38
Harrison	8	11	65	14
Henry	2	61	63	21
Highland	25	69	226	94
Hocking	31	148	144	63
Holmes	19	31	138	21
Huron	32	181	430	124
Jackson	11	128	284	69
Jefferson	84	170	425	290
Knox	16	59	406	44
Lake	47	245	397	149
Lawrence	4	6	70	16
Licking	36	40	457	294
Logan	3	79	370	60

	Broken Tooth	Cavities	Dental Disorders	Abscess
Lorain	157	357	1,643	361
Lucas	265	1,265	3,036	744
Madison	16	64	137	54
Mahoning	128	267	735	321
Marion	26	209	219	124
Medina	29	175	403	55
Meigs	2	40	68	14
Mercer	7	23	91	18
Miami	25	117	187	103
Monroe	0	14	26	4
Montgomery	219	577	1,325	587
Morgan	1	19	24	7
Morrow	4	25	145	37
Muskingum	36	150	501	287
Noble	2	10	35	11
Ottawa	7	61	188	31
Paulding	3	31	45	13
Perry	10	37	119	49
Pickaway	32	72	196	84
Pike	28	66	204	59
Portage	27	66	269	80
Preble	3	13	45	11
Putnam	4	42	44	19
Richland	74	134	697	138
Ross	78	203	287	116
Sandusky	21	51	213	80
Scioto	26	290	166	84
Seneca	28	160	382	59
Shelby	9	63	113	45
Stark	153	899	1,409	280
Summit	234	851	2,570	610
Trumbull	116	433	797	348
Tuscarawas	33	178	267	66
Union	6	33	60	11
Van Wert	15	67	233	52
Vinton	13	44	78	17
Warren	31	109	238	87
Washington	13	253	190	71
Wayne	60	353	475	143
Williams	16	143	108	23
Wood	21	196	376	69
Wyandot	5	47	55	13
TOTAL	4,659	19,070	47,772	12,826



UHCAN Ohio | 370 South Fifth Street, Suite G3 Columbus, OH 43215 | 614-456-0060, ext. 225 | uhcanohio.org

David Maywhoor, Project Director | dmaywhoor@uhcanohio.org

UHCAN Ohio is a statewide nonprofit organization working for high quality, accessible, affordable health care for all Ohioans.