

ASTHMA HOSPITALIZATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a chronic disease of the lungs characterized by wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing at night or early in the morning. The cause of asthma is unclear but several triggers such as pollen, animal dander, mold, cockroaches, dust mites, tobacco smoke, physical activity, certain foods and medication have been associated with asthma. Asthma has no cure but it can be effectively managed to reduce the severity of symptoms. An asthma hospitalization is a marker for the effectiveness of asthma management and control measures. An increase in the asthma hospitalization rate represents adverse outcomes in the overall management of asthma and directly increases the cost of care of persons with asthma.

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In 2013, there were 18,439 inpatient hospitalizations due to asthma in Pennsylvania. These hospitalizations represent approximately 14.2 inpatient admissions per 10,000 Pennsylvania residents.

Asthma inpatient hospitalizations rates have decreased over the period of five years from 19.2 per 10,000 residents in 2009 to 14.2 per 10,000 residents in 2013.

Females had higher rates of inpatient hospitalizations rates (16.8 per 10,000) with asthma as the primary discharge diagnosis compared to males (11.8 per 10,000).

Blacks had higher inpatient hospitalizations rates (42.9 per 10,000) due to asthma compared to whites (8.4 per 10,000) as well as higher rates (42.9 per 10,000) compared to other races (37.8 per 10,000).

Hispanics had higher inpatient hospitalizations rates (21.1 per 10,000) due to asthma compared to non-Hispanics (13.9 per 10,000).

The average charge for inpatient hospitalization with asthma increased in the five-year period from \$22,719 in 2009 to \$26,952 in 2013.

The total charge for inpatient hospitalization (excluding professional fees/physician charges) due to asthma in 2013 was \$496,970,993.

Medicare and Medicaid payments accounted for 31.3 percent and 39.5 percent of all payments, respectively, for inpatient hospitalizations due to asthma.

The average length of stay for each asthma hospitalization was 3.3 days.

Philadelphia County had the highest rate of inpatient hospitalization with asthma in the years 2009 to 2013 at 46.7 per 10,000. This rate in Pennsylvania during the time period was 16.3 per 10,000.

Data source: Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4)

For more information regarding this information, please contact the Asthma Control Program, Pennsylvania Department of Health

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