

Access to Emergency Services

Demand for emergency care is growing fast and the nation is unable to meet this demand.

- ▶ Emergency department visits in the U.S. increased by 36 percent to 119 million in 2006, up from 90 million in 1996.¹ This increase can be linked to both the aging of the population and the growing number of individuals who cannot afford medical care or have nowhere else to go for care.²
- ▶ Although the average number of emergency departments nationwide is 20 departments per 1 million people, the number ranges from as many as 66 per 1 million people in South Dakota to as few as 6.6 per 1 million people in New Jersey.²
- ▶ Between 1993 and 2003, the number of hospitals in the U.S. decreased by 703, the number of hospital beds dropped by 198,000, and the number of emergency departments fell by 425.³
- ▶ Shortages of health care professionals affect access to emergency care. This can be particularly challenging in rural areas where 20 percent of America's population reside but only 9 percent of the nation's physicians serve.⁴



As a whole, the nation is doing poorly in providing access to emergency health care services.

- ▶ The American College of Emergency Physicians graded the states on health care issues and gave an overall average grade of D- in providing access to emergency care.²
- ▶ The District of Columbia was the only recipient of a grade of A. It has the highest rate of health care professionals and lower-than-average rates of uninsured. It also benefits from being in a highly populated area with high numbers of specialists, physicians who accept Medicare, staffed inpatient beds and high number of Medicaid recipients.²
- ▶ More than half the states received a D or an F. The states, by ranking, receiving a failing grade include California, Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Nevada, South Carolina, Georgia, Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Oklahoma.²

States are taking action to increase access to emergency care.

- ▶ States are increasing Medicaid fee levels to attract providers and assure access. From 2004–2007, at least 31 states increased physician rates in their Medicaid programs. In 2008, 27 states reported increases and 29 states plan to increase physician rates in 2009.⁴
- ▶ States are focusing on covering the uninsured to assure access to needed health care services.
- ▶ Nearly all states have loan forgiveness programs and incentives in place to attract physicians and other health care providers to medically underserved areas.^{5,6}
- ▶ States are increasingly reimbursing for telemedicine services to provide greater access in remote areas. At least 24 states reimburse for telemedicine in their Medicaid programs.⁷

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Health Statistics Report, No. 7 (August 6, 2008)

² The National Report Card on the State of Emergency Medicine, 2009.

³ Institute of Medicine, Report Brief: The Future of Emergency Care .in the United States Health System (June 2006).

⁴ Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, "Headed for a Crunch: An Update on Medicaid Spending, Coverage and Policy Heading into an Economic Downturn", accessed from www.kff.org/medicaid/7815.cfm HHS Rural Task Force Report to the Secretary (July 2002).

⁵ Traditional Approaches by States to Financing Medical Education, accessed from www.cogme.gov/ManagedCare/5.htm

⁶ Promoting access to care in rural and underserved areas: is there a physician shortage in the United States? Some statistics say "no." Others say "yes." Accessed from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3257/is_7_59/ai_n14919616 February 25, 2009

⁷ Institute for Child Health Policy, "Telemedicine for CSHCN: A State-by-State Comparison of Medicaid Reimbursement Policies and Title V Activities," July 2005.

NATIONAL REPORT CARD ON ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CARE 2009

State	Rank	Grade	Board-Certified Emergency Physicians/ 100,000 Pop.	Registered Nurses/ 100,000 Pop.	Level I or II Trauma Centers/ 1 M Pop.	% of Change for Medicaid Fees in Office Visits/ 2004–2007	% of Adults Without Health Insurance	% of Children Without Health Insurance	% of Adults with Medicaid	Emergency Dept./ 1 M. Pop.
Alabama	30	D-	↑ 3.9	↑ 918.9	0.2	7.2	17.8	7.4	8.5	↓ 12.4
Alaska	28	C-	↑ 13	↓ 760.2	1.5	NR	18.9	10.3	7.6	↑ 23.6
Arizona	48	F	↑ 8.6	↓ 560.8	1.1	16.2	22.3	17	10.4	↑ 7.1
Arkansas	35	D-	↑ 4	↓ 780.3	0	9.8	22.1	9.3	6.3	↓ 28.8
California	51	F	↑ 9.2	↑ 643.3	1.2	9.1	20.9	12.8	10.7	↑ 7.1
Colorado	31	D-	↑ 13.5	↓ 773.1	2.7	21.3	18.1	14.6	6.4	↑ 11.7
Connecticut	15	C+	↑ 9.8	↓ 992.3	3.1	4	10.5	6	8	↓ 8
Delaware	8	B-	↑ 8	↓ 987.4	1.2	NR	12.3	11.7	6.2	↓ 7
Dist. of Columbia	1	A	↓ 11	↓ 1385.2	5.1	0	12.4	8.7	13.7	↓ 10.2
Florida	50	F	↑ 8	↓ 820.6	1	-10.1	21.9	18.9	5.7	↓ 7.2
Georgia	44	F	↑ 7	↓ 666.1	1.2	0	19.5	12.8	6.4	↓ 11.3
Hawaii	22	C	↑ 13.9	↓ 752.4	0.8	-48	9.6	6.3	7	↑ 12.5
Idaho	42	F	↑ 8.7	↓ 655.8	0.7	3.7	3.7	16.3	13	↑ 20.5
Illinois	39	D-	↑ 9.9	↓ 815	4.4	0.1	15.6	9.5	6.6	↓ 12.4
Indiana	29	D-	↑ 7.3	↓ 869	1	NR	13.1	7.8	6	↑ 14.4
Iowa	9	B-	↑ 4	↓ 994.1	2.3	3	11.9	6.3	9.7	↑ 40
Kansas	7	B-	↑ 7.1	↓ 873.4	1.8	54.3	14	7.3	5.7	↑ 46.4
Kentucky	19	C	↑ 6.1	↓ 930.4	0.5	0	17.5	9.7	9.6	↓ 20.5
Louisiana	33	D-	↑ 6.9	↑ 921.2	0.2	-19.2	23.9	15.9	9.6	↓ 16.5
Maine	2	B+	↑ 12.8	↓ 1053.3	2.3	5.4	10.1	6.4	14.9	↓ 26.6
Maryland	25	C-	↑ 11	↓ 871.8	1.1	2.9	15.1	9.9	5.2	↓ 8.4
Massachusetts	3	B-	↑ 12.1	↓ 1216.6	1.2	10	11.4	7	10.9	↓ 9.8
Michigan	37	D-	↑ 11	↓ 836.2	1.6	NR	12.3	4.7	8.2	↓ 12.6
Minnesota	20	C	↑ 7.6	↓ 1022.2	1.4	-13	9.5	8.3	9.1	↓ 19.6
Mississippi	27	C-	↑ 4.8	↑ 874.4	1.7	0.7	21.4	18.9	11.8	↑ 30
Missouri	18	C	↑ 7.1	↓ 964.3	3.1	17.7	14.6	9.1	6	↓ 20.7
Montana	24	C-	↑ 9.2	↓ 756.2	4.2	6.5	17.9	14.5	7.5	↓ 54.9
Nebraska	4	B	↑ 5.5	↓ 1013.2	1.7	10.2	13.1	10.1	5.3	↓ 38
Nevada	46	F	↑ 9.2	↑ 588.6	1.2	0	19.8	18.8	4.1	↑ 8.4
New Hampshire	11	B-	↑ 9.8	↓ 970.4	3.8	12	12.7	7.5	3.3	↓ 20.6
New Jersey	16	C	↑ 8.3	↓ 905.9	1.2	-14.4	16.2	13.3	4.5	↓ 6.6
New Mexico	49	F	↑ 9.1	↓ 586.9	0.6	13.2	24.8	17.9	8.4	↑ 15.4
New York	36	D-	↑ 8.1	↓ 866	2.1	0	15.7	8.4	14.5	↓ 7.1
North Carolina	34	D-	↑ 9.2	↓ 903	1	-0.2	19.2	14	8.1	↑ 11.7
North Dakota	6	B-	↑ 6.1	↓ 1098.1	9.4	3.2	12.8	10.3	4.8	↑ 56.5
Ohio	14	C+	↑ 10	↓ 1002.5	1.9	0	11.5	5.7	9.1	↑ 13.1
Oklahoma	40	F	↑ 6.1	↓ 718.4	0.8	12.1	21.2	12.5	5.3	↑ 30.5
Oregon	41	F	↑ 13.4	↓ 804.6	1.3	0.4	19.3	13.1	7.1	↓ 15.7
Pennsylvania	23	C-	↑ 10.1	↓ 1018.9	1.9	38.1	10.8	7.3	7.7	↓ 12
Rhode Island	10	B-	↑ 11.4	↓ 998.5	1	-21	9.9	4.1	17.9	↑ 11.3
South Carolina	45	F	↑ 8.7	↓ 809.2	1.1	-21	17.6	10.7	8.7	↑ 13.9
South Dakota	12	C+	↑ 4.9	↓ 1226.4	2.5	38.6	12.7	9.2	4.8	↓ 66
Tennessee	21	C	↑ 5.7	↓ 904.7	1.1	NR	16.1	6.4	8	↓ 13.8
Texas	47	F	↑ 5.7	↑ 674.4	0.9	NR	25.8	21.2	6.4	↑ 17.5
Utah	32	D-	↑ 9.4	↓ 646.2	1.5	23	18.6	15	5.3	↓ 12.4
Vermont	17	C	↑ 10.8	↓ 911.8	1.6	62.2	10.8	8	13.6	↑ 24.2
Virginia	38	D-	↑ 9.4	↓ 755.7	1	8.2	14.4	10.1	3.9	↓ 8.5
Washington	43	F	↑ 10.4	↓ 782.9	1.1	-26	13.4	6.9	8.4	↓ 10
West Virginia	5	B	↑ 8.2	↓ 983.2	3.3	6.9	14.9	8.5	11.1	↑ 31
Wisconsin	26	C-	↑ 8.3	↓ 909.6	1.4	-19.2	10	4.9	7.4	↑ 21.7
Wyoming	13	C+	↑ 8.8	↓ 828.9	3.8	33.4	16.6	8.2	4.4	↓ 48.8
Nation		D-		873.7	1.8	6	17.2	11.7	7.9	19.9

↑ Improved Since 2006 ↓ Worsened Since 2006

Sources: Institute for Highway Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration