

# Seniors' Visits to the Emergency Department (ED): A Fact Sheet

Summary of findings from RESDAC and HCUP data from 2013  
HCUP SEDD & SID – California 2011  
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## Seniors account for a disproportionate number of ED visits in the US.

In 2013, seniors (aged 65 and older) accounted for 14% of the US population [1], but 18% of all ED encounters [2]. Seniors made 23.9 million visits to the ED in 2013 [2], equivalent to 0.53 annual ED visits for every senior [1, 2]. Senior nursing home residents averaged an estimated 1.8 ED visits each from 2005 – 2010 [3].

## Once in the ED, seniors are more likely to be admitted to the hospital than others.

In 2013, 14% of all ED visits in the US resulted in hospitalization, but the rate for seniors was 36% [2]. Seniors made up 46% of all ED visits resulting in hospitalization [2]. Among those over 65 years old, the percent of hospitalizations originating in the ED increases with age [4].

## The most common conditions seen in the ED are the same between seniors and adults aged 18-64, but seniors are much more likely to be hospitalized for these conditions.

The top 5 conditions seen among ED patients in 2013 nationally were the same between seniors and adults aged 18-64, but seniors were hospitalized much more often than non-senior adults for these conditions [2].

Top 5 Conditions presenting to ER	Seniors hospitalized (%)	Adults 18-64 hospitalized (%)
Pneumonia	69%	30%
Septicemia	68%	32%
Cardiac dysrhythmias	72%	28%
Congestive heart failure (non-hypertension)	74%	26%
COPD / bronchiectasis	65%	35%

## A significant percent of seniors discharged from the ED are readmitted to the ED within days.

In 2009, 4.2% of seniors discharged from the ED revisited within 72 hours [5]. In 2011 for state of California, seniors accounted for approximately 1.3 million visits to the ED of which 15.9% of seniors discharged from the ED revisited within 30 days [6].

Senior ED Revisits (California, 2011)	
Days after discharge from an ED visit	Senior ED Revisit Rates - (%)
3 days	5.3%
7 days	8.3%
10 days	9.8%
30 days	15.9%

[1] [DHSS](#), 2014

[2] HCUP-NEDS (analyzed by WHI)

[3] [Burke, et al.](#), 2015 from NHAMCS data

[4] [Greenwald, et al.](#), 2014 from NHDS data

[5] [Pines, et al.](#), 2013 from NHAMCS data

[6] HCUP-SEDD (CA), 2011 (analyzed by WHI)

**Figure 1: Patient Flow from ED to Hospital by Age Group**

