

2012 Healthcare Benchmarks

Reducing Avoidable ER Visits



Note: This is an authorized excerpt from *2012 Benchmarks in Reducing Avoidable ER Visits*. To download the entire report, go to <http://store.hin.com/product.asp?itemid=4341> or call 888-446-3530.

2012 Benchmarks in Reducing Avoidable ER Visits

134 healthcare organizations describe how they are working to staunch the flow and expense of avoidable emergency department use and point low-acuity patients in the direction of appropriate care.



“Connecting patients with a care manager at the primary care practice and using the nurse call line to schedule appointments [is our most successful strategy for reducing avoidable ER visits].”

> **Other healthcare provider**



“Bi-state patients utilizing the ER for non-emergency needs is our [targeted population]. This includes patients in all pay categories.”

> **Hospital**



“Our [successful strategy for reducing avoidable ER visits] include getting involved before the patient is discharged, arranging a home visit as soon as possible after discharge and medication management.”

> **Health plan**



“A partnership between payors, hospitals, physicians and alternate care providers with aligned incentives is key to [reducing avoidable ED usage].”

> **Other healthcare provider**

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About the Healthcare Intelligence Network

The Healthcare Intelligence Network (HIN) is an electronic publishing company providing high-quality information on the business of healthcare. In one place, healthcare executives can receive exclusive, customized up-to-the-minute information in five key areas: the healthcare and managed care industry, hospital and health system management, health law and regulation, behavioral healthcare and long-term care.

Executive Summary

With consensus widespread that much of emergency room use is avoidable and preventable, many healthcare organizations are working to staunch the flow and expense of avoidable emergency department use and point low-acuity patients in the direction of appropriate care.

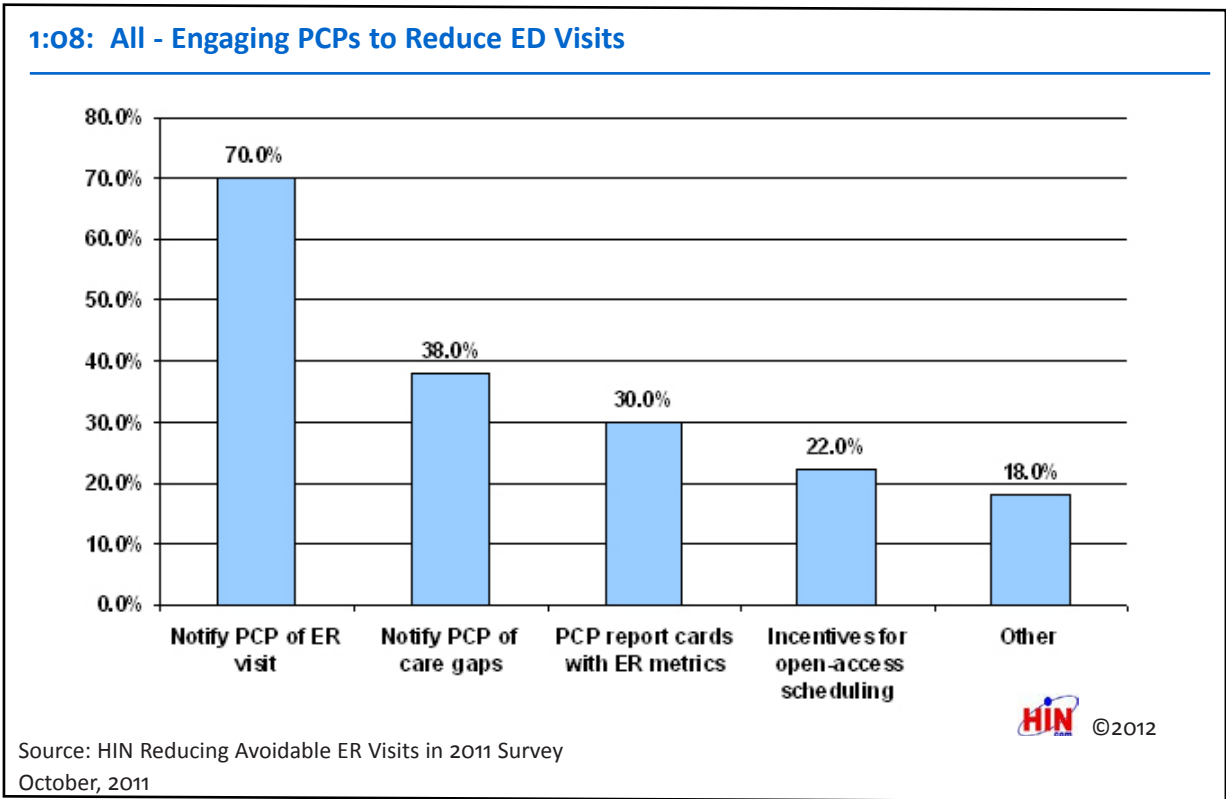
To promote proxy and alternate health services to patients, half of survey respondents contact the patient within 48 hours of an ED visit.

In its September 2011 “Reducing Avoidable Emergency Room Visits” e-survey, the Healthcare Intelligence Network continued to probe the programs and captured the steps organizations are taking to reduce avoidable use of the hospital ER. Through responses provided by 134 healthcare organizations to 20 multiple choice and open-ended questions, the survey results reveal that patient education and urgent care or walk-in centers continue to be the preferred approaches to prevent inappropriate use of the ER; that case managers continue to be an integral part of the solution both in the ER and the primary care office, and that more organizations are engaging PCPs to help in their efforts to reduce low-acuity ER visits.

Survey Highlights

- ▶ Nearly 70 percent of respondents have programs in place to reduce avoidable ED usage; this figure has jumped by 10 percent from 2007, and has remained consistent since 2010.
- ▶ High utilizers continued to be the top contributors to avoidable ER use, according to 30.2 percent of respondents. Of this population, pain management was the most frequently presented problem, as reported by 42 percent of organizations, a 25 percent increase from 2010. Medication non-adherence was reported as the second most presented problem, consistent with figures from last year.
- ▶ Nearly 50 percent of respondents used phone follow-up within two days to reduce avoidable ER visits by patients recently discharged from the ED or hospital. Redirecting non-emergent patients overtook funding as the greatest

How do you engage primary care providers (PCP) in your efforts to reduce low-acuity ED visits?



By what percentage have you reduced avoidable ER visits in your population?

