An emergency department (ED) visit is considered potentially avoidable when the care provided may have been more appropriately managed by a primary care practitioner (PCP) in a lower cost setting, such as a physician’s office.

**COMMON AVOIDABLE VISITS ACROSS VIRGINIA**

Of the 188,149 potentially avoidable ED visits, 82% were for:

- **Headache; including migraine**: 11% of visits  
  $1,155 per ED visit | $81 per PCP visit
- **Inner ear infections**: 9% of visits  
  $271 per ED visit | $78 per PCP visit
- **Upper respiratory infections**: 30% of visits  
  $385 per ED visit | $77 per PCP visit
- **Back problems**: 11% of visits  
  $806 per ED visit | $81 per PCP visit
- **Urinary tract infections**: 21% of visits  
  $938 per ED visit | $79 per PCP visit

Total Cost for Avoidable ED visits in 2018: **$103,877,090**
Total Cost for Similar Care by a PCP in 2018: **$12,061,845**

**POTENTIAL SAVINGS OF $91,815,245**

These visits have a large impact on the cost of healthcare for all Virginians. Using data from the Virginia All Payer Claims Database (APCD), Virginia Health Information identified that **about 13%** of the 1.5 million ED visits in 2018 may have potentially been avoided and treated with lower cost care in a PCP’s office.

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1Potentially avoidable ED visits were defined using the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) methodology. Other methodologies for potentially avoidable ED visits exist, which could produce different results.