An emergency department (ED) visit is considered potentially avoidable\(^1\) 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 205,317 potentially avoidable ED visits, 75% were for:

- Headache; including migraine: 10% of visits
  - $1,129 per ED visit | $83 per PCP visit
- Inner ear infections: 8% of visits
  - $262 per ED visit | $77 per PCP visit
- Upper respiratory infections: 27% of visits
  - $369 per ED visit | $77 per PCP visit
- Back problems: 10% of visits
  - $756 per ED visit | $80 per PCP visit
- Urinary tract infections: 20% of visits
  - $961 per ED visit | $78 per PCP visit

Total Cost for Avoidable ED visits in 2017: $114,046,525
Total Cost for Similar Care by a PCP in 2017: $13,530,702

**POTENTIAL SAVINGS OF $100,515,823**

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 14% of the 1.5 million ED visits in 2017 may have potentially been avoided and treated with lower cost care in a PCP’s office.

\(^1\)Potentially 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.