



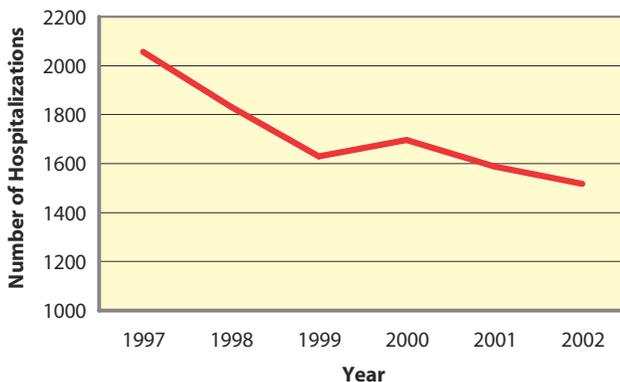
Hospital Admissions for Firearm-Related Injuries in Pennsylvania

Hospital admissions for firearm-related injuries in Pennsylvania are decreasing but continue to occur disproportionately in urban areas and represent increasing costs to publicly financed health care.

Trends in hospital admissions for firearm-related injuries (emergency department visits excluded) for the years 1997 through 2002 illustrate some important changes in the occurrences and characteristics of these types of hospitalizations in Pennsylvania.

The number of hospital admissions for all types of firearm-related injuries decreased 26.2 percent between 1997 and 2002.

Figure 1:
Total Number of Hospitalizations for Firearm-Related Injuries in PA - 1997-2002



In 1997 there were 2,056 hospital admissions for firearm-related injuries, compared to 1,518 in 2002. Assault (purposely inflicted) was the leading cause of hospitalizations for firearm-related injuries, representing 66 percent of all such admissions.

Table 1:
Hospital Admissions by Firearm-Related Injury Type - 2002

Firearm-Related Injury Type	Hospital Admissions	
	Number	Percent
Total	1,518	100%
Assault	1,006	66.3%
Unintentionally inflicted	292	19.2%
Self-inflicted	138	9.1%
Undetermined	82	5.4%

Total hospital charges for firearm-related injuries amounted to almost \$127 million in 2002.

Over \$100 million (about 80%) of these charges were associated with assault-related hospitalizations.

The average charge for hospitalizations for firearm-related injuries increased 87 percent from 1997 to 2002, compared to a 49 percent growth in charges for hospitalizations in general. Among the types of injuries, charges for assault-related admissions grew the most with a 129 percent increase from 1997 to 2002.

Table 2:
Average Hospital Charge and Rate of Increase - 1997-2002

Firearm-Related Injury Type	Average Charge		Rate of Increase
	1997	2002	
Total	\$15,679	\$29,362	87.3%
Assault	\$16,739	\$38,366	129.2%
Unintentionally inflicted	\$9,351	\$16,105	72.2%
Self-inflicted	\$20,248	\$26,380	30.3%
Undetermined	\$17,867	\$23,189	29.8%

With total hospital charges of almost \$77 million, Medical Assistance incurred the cost for nearly half of all hospital admissions for firearm-related injuries in Pennsylvania in 2002.

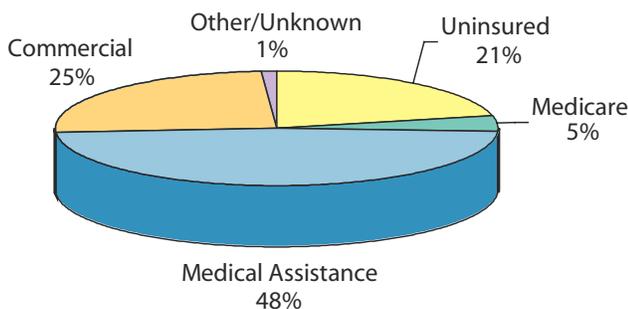
In 2002, 48 percent (730 cases) of the hospital admissions for firearm-related injuries identified

Medical Assistance as the primary payer. The \$77 million in charges for these admissions represents 60 percent of the total charges for all firearm-related hospitalizations.

Over 21 percent of the firearm-related injury victims had no health insurance coverage.

Although the uninsured hospitalizations for firearm-related injuries decreased slightly between 1997 and 2002, the uninsured rate of 21 percent in 2002 was over ten times higher than the uninsured rate of 2.0 percent for all types of hospitalizations in Pennsylvania. The total charge for the 324 uninsured hospitalizations for firearm-related injuries in 2002 was over \$15 million.

**Figure 2:
Payment Source for Hospitalizations Resulting from Firearm-Related Injuries - 2002**

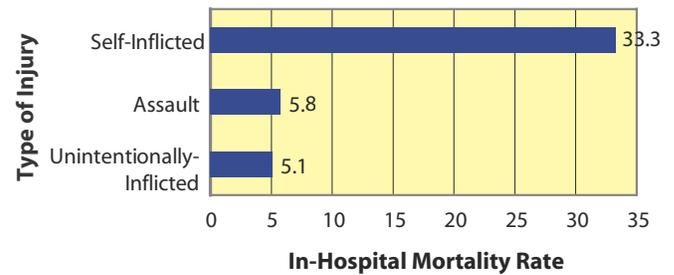


The in-hospital mortality rate for firearm-related injuries increased approximately 12 percent from 1997 to 2002.

In 1997, the in-hospital mortality rate for firearm-related injuries was 7.6 percent, which was slightly above the national average of 7.0 percent. In 2002, the in-hospital mortality rate increased to 8.5 percent (national figures are not yet available for

2002). Of all types of firearm-related injuries, self-inflicted injury resulted in the highest percent of in-hospital deaths.

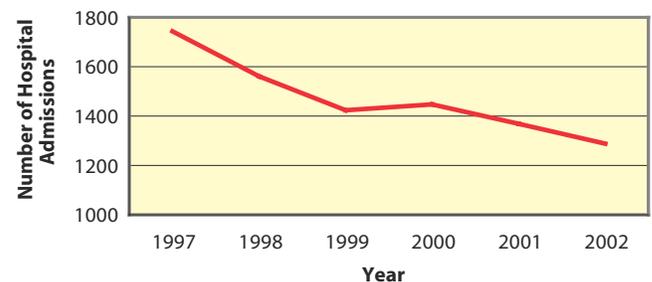
**Figure 3:
In-Hospital Mortality Rate by Firearm-Related Injury Type - 2002**



The number of hospital admissions for all types of firearm-related injuries decreased 26.1 percent in Pennsylvania's urban counties between 1997 and 2002.

Although hospital admissions for firearm-related injuries continued to occur disproportionately in urban counties (about 85 percent occurred in these areas), the number has decreased from 1,743 in 1997 to 1,288 in 2002.

**Figure 4:
Number of Hospital Admissions for Firearm-Related Injuries in Urban Counties - 1997-2002**



The Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4) periodically releases *Research Briefs* on health care topics relevant to public policy interest.

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