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 113,164 potentially avoidable ED visits, **88%** were for:

- **Headache; including migraine** (9% of visits) $1,115 per ED visit | $86 per PCP visit
- **Inner ear infections** (5% of visits) $280 per ED visit | $83 per PCP visit
- **Upper respiratory infections** (33% of visits) $526 per ED visit | $81 per PCP visit
- **Back problems** (14% of visits) $743 per ED visit | $84 per PCP visit
- **Urinary tract infections** (27% of visits) $983 per ED visit | $84 per PCP visit

**Total Cost for Avoidable ED visits in 2020** $75,000,318  
**Total Cost for Similar Care by a PCP in 2020** $ 8,310,142

**Potential Savings of $66,690,177**

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 10%** of the 1.1 million ED visits in 2020 may have potentially been avoided and treated with lower cost care in a PCP’s office.

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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.

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