

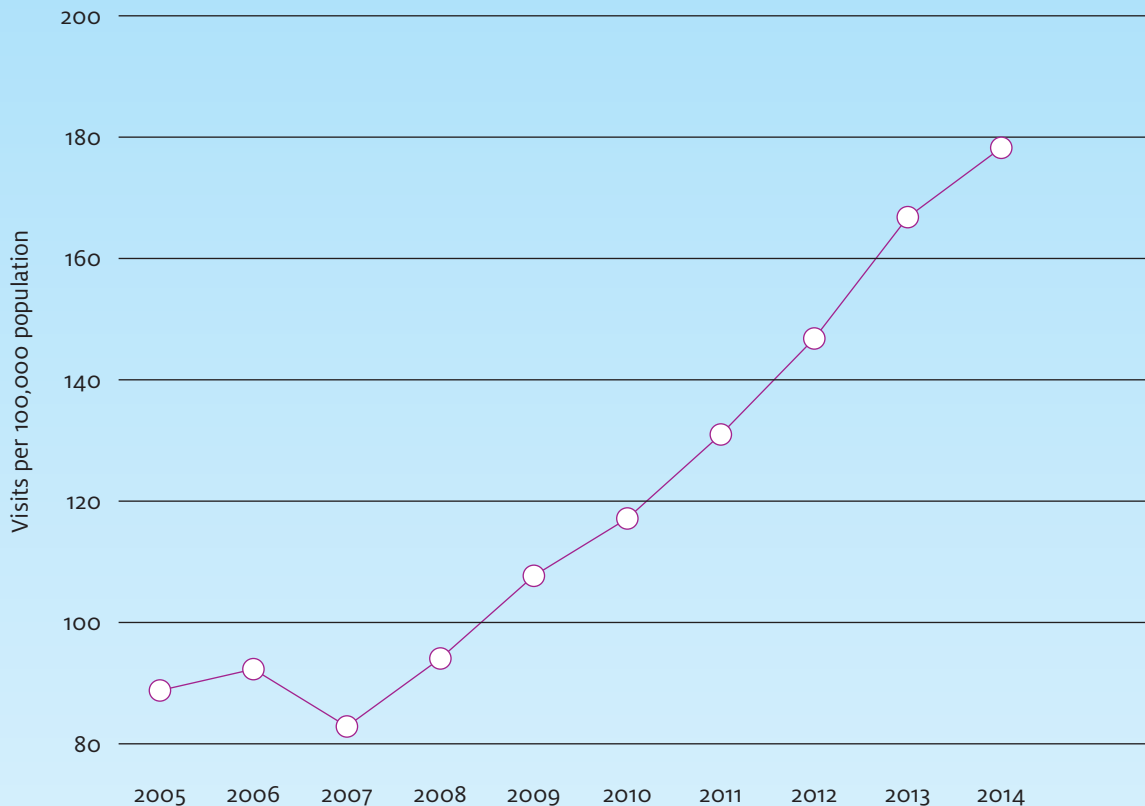


DEVELOPING DATA

Opioid Visits Keep Skyrocketing

Driven partially by increased use of the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl, patients continued to flood emergency rooms across the country in increasing numbers over the 10-year period ending in 2014, according to data from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ; see graph below). The implications for urgent care are A) that some of those patients surely received their first opioid prescriptions in an urgent care center legitimately for treatment of acute pain, underscoring the need for continued vigilance and commitment to responsible prescribing practices, and B) as always, patients and hospitals need to be aware that urgent care stands ready to treat patients who don't belong in the emergency room, offering a way to reduce bottlenecks and ensure that true emergencies—in this case, patients who may have overdosed on an opioid pain medication—receive potentially lifesaving care as quickly as possible.

OPIOID-RELATED ED VISITS



Data source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

AHRQ also tracks opioid-related ED visits by state, and reports that the problem is most acute in Massachusetts (450.2 visits per 100,000 residents), Maryland (300.7), Rhode Island (298.3), Ohio (287.9); and Connecticut (254.6).