



# The Data Are Clear: Urgent Care Visits Almost Always Suffice for Low-Acuity Cervical Trauma

Reducing the need for patients to visit hospital emergency rooms (as well as the associated cost) is an essential attribute and key selling point of the urgent care industry. Remarkably few studies have been conducted to confirm this in practice, however. But when they are undertaken, they tend to prove that this isn't just hype; proper utilization of urgent care really can preclude the need for many patients to go to the ED, and that really does save money.

Case in point: A recent study concerning patients who presented to an urgent care center with what was ultimately deemed to be minor cervical trauma showed that only 1.4% of patients who received initial imaging for their injuries in the

urgent care center had to be referred to the emergency room for further imaging (see the graph below).<sup>1</sup>

Actual savings associated with the 4-month study period amounted to \$3,696.25. The authors extrapolated that figure to project that annual savings would be \$11,088.74. In addition, using average cost of an urgent care visit compared with an emergency visit, they predicted that proper utilization of urgent care could produce savings of \$437,928 per year. ■

#### References

1. Virji AZ, Cheloff AZ, Ghoshal S, et al. Analysis of self-initiated visits for cervical trauma at urgent care centers and subsequent emergency department referral. *Clin Imaging.* 2022;91:14–18.

### PATIENTS REFERRED—AND NOT REFERRED—TO THE ED FOR CERVICAL TRAUMA IMAGING AFTER UC IMAGING DURING THE 4-MONTH STUDY PERIOD



Data source: Virji AZ, et al. *Clin Imaging.* 2022;91:14–18.