

# ER Visits by High-Use Participants Drop 40% from 2018 to 2019

*SASH coordinators and wellness nurses form close relationships with participants. They are attuned to their participants' health needs and concerns, so when something goes awry they can then step in to avert a health crisis — and potentially a costly trip to the emergency room.*

**S**ASH participants with a history of frequent hospital emergency room (ER) visits showed an average drop of three visits per person from 2018 to 2019, resulting in a significant savings in health care costs, according to a recent analysis of statewide SASH data.

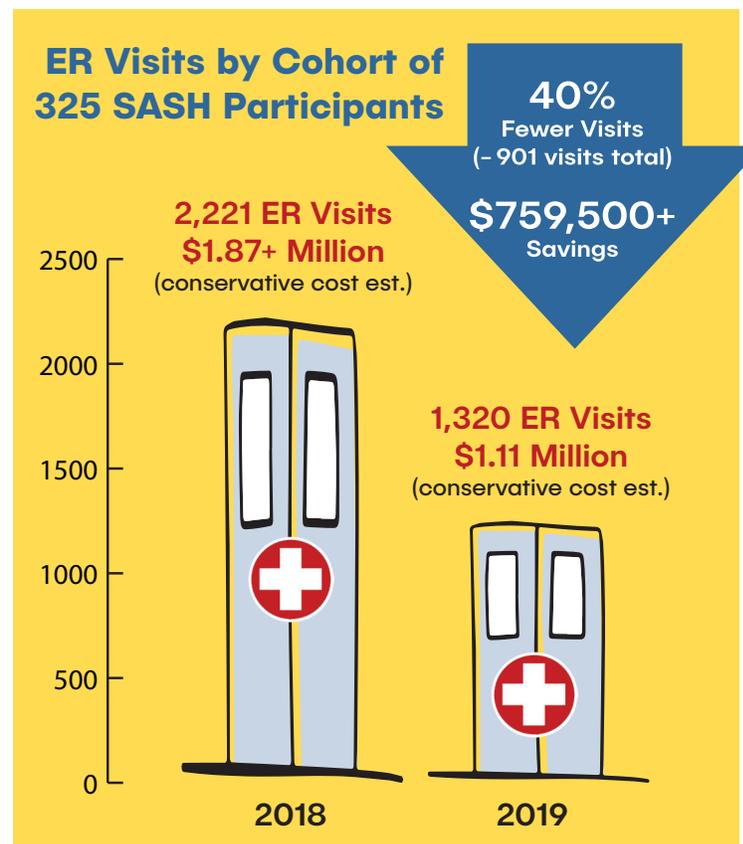
The analysis looked at data on ER admissions for Vermont SASH participants who were active in both 2018 and 2019 and who showed "high ER utilization," defined as four or more visits per year, in 2018.

There were 325 participants who met these criteria. They accounted for 2,221 ER visits in 2018 and 1,320 visits — 901 fewer — in 2019, or a median decline of three visits per person.

**At an average cost of \$843 per basic, mid-level ER visit, the resulting savings in health care costs would be \$759,543.** This is a highly conservative estimate because it excludes tests, procedures and other charges, such as ambulance transportation.<sup>1</sup>

It is worth noting that the period of January 2019 through December 2020 showed the

same median decline of three ER visits per person; however, this result was excluded from this analysis due to the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the numbers.



<sup>1</sup> The National Center for Health Statistics reports that the percentage of those arriving at the ER by ambulance ranges from 23% to 53% for adults age 60 and older. (Data Brief No. 367, June 2020: "Emergency Department Visits Among Adults Aged 60 and Over: United States, 2014–2017"; [cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db367.htm](https://cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db367.htm))

2019 Average Hospital & Physician Charges for an ER Visit in Vermont		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
	Hospital Charge	\$242	\$351	\$580	\$882	\$1,275
	Physician Charge	\$99	\$897	\$263	\$396	\$555
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$341</b>	<b>\$501</b>	<b>\$843</b>	<b>\$1,292</b>	<b>\$1,830</b>

Levels refer to the complexity of care required, with 5 being the highest. Does not include cost of tests, procedures and other charges. Source: [healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HS\\_Stats\\_3D\\_ED\\_2019.pdf](https://healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HS_Stats_3D_ED_2019.pdf).