

Running the Numbers

*A Periodic Feature to Inform North Carolina Healthcare Professionals
about Current Topics in Health Statistics*

*From the State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS*

Patient Flow between Hospitals and Nursing Homes in North Carolina in 2003

The North Carolina Hospital Discharge Data Base consists of more than one million records each year for inpatients discharged from North Carolina hospitals. These records contain information on the source of admission and the discharge status for each patient. This information allows us to describe the volume and characteristics of hospital patients who are transferred directly from and to nursing homes.

During calendar year 2003, there were 1,037,913 inpatient discharges from North Carolina hospitals. Forty-two percent of these hospital patients had their admission source listed as "referral" and 38% had "emergency room" listed. Only 1,411 or 0.1% were identified as being transferred to the hospital directly from a nursing home (skilled nursing facility). Of these 1,411 patients, diseases of the respiratory and circulatory system were the most common principal diagnoses (25% and 18%, respectively), 80% were age 65 and older, 64% were females, and Medicare was the most common expected source of payment (89%).

Seventy-seven percent of all hospital patients in 2003 were discharged to home/self care (routine discharge). Seven percent were discharged to their home under the care of an organized home health services agency. About 7% were transferred to nursing homes: 6.4% or 66,307 to a skilled nursing facility and 0.5% or 4,753 to an intermediate care facility. Another 855 were transferred to "long-term care" and 299 were transferred to a "Medicaid-approved nursing facility."

The following table compares 2003 hospital patients with a routine discharge to those transferred to skilled and intermediate care nursing facilities, by selected patient characteristics.

Percent	Routine Discharge	Discharged to Skilled Nursing Facility	Discharged to Intermediate Care Facility
Age			
Under age 65	75.5	13.9	23.3
65-74	12.0	18.8	14.8
75-84	9.5	37.8	31.8
85+	3.0	29.5	30.1
Gender			
Female	60.4	66.3	65.0
Payer			
Medicare	30.3	89.9	83.3
Other	69.7	10.1	16.7
Principal Diagnosis			
Circulatory system	16.1	15.7	16.2
Respiratory system	9.3	16.9	18.6
Digestive system	8.8	8.0	8.3
Nervous system	4.5	10.8	9.4
Musculoskeletal system	5.1	19.8	6.8
Mental disorder	4.4	1.8	13.3
Pregnancy/delivery/newborn	28.8	0.0	0.6
Other	23.0	27.0	26.8

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