

## Eli's Rehab Report

### Let EDs Know: We've Got Your Back

#### Attack back pain where it's most common -- hospitals.

Can you guess what made the top 10 list for most expensive conditions treated in U.S. hospitals? If you said back injuries, you're likely already ahead of this statistic.

Nearly three million emergency department visits in 2008 were to seek treatment for back problems, according to the latest News and Numbers report by the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** (AHRQ). On average, 9,400 ED patients sought back care daily and 663,000 patients required inpatient care per year.

In the same year, AHRQ also found that:

- Adults under age 44 were the most likely to require just ED care for back pain.
- Adults ages 65 to 84 had the highest rates of hospitalization after seeking treatment for back pain.
- Women were more likely to seek ED care for back pain and, subsequently, were more likely to be hospitalized than men.

The cost: Inpatient stays principally for back problems clocked in at nearly \$10 billion in 2008, making it the ninth most expensive treated in hospitals.

Opportunity: Often, a therapist's preventative measures and proper training can reduce or eliminate chronic back pain -- keeping patients out of hospitals and drastically reducing healthcare costs.

Therapists should inform ED docs about their services. That way ED docs can share that information with patients and help patients see the value in therapy as an ongoing and preventative treatment option.