

Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, Division of Mental Health
108 Cherry Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani and Brennan Martin

DATE: December 29, 2006

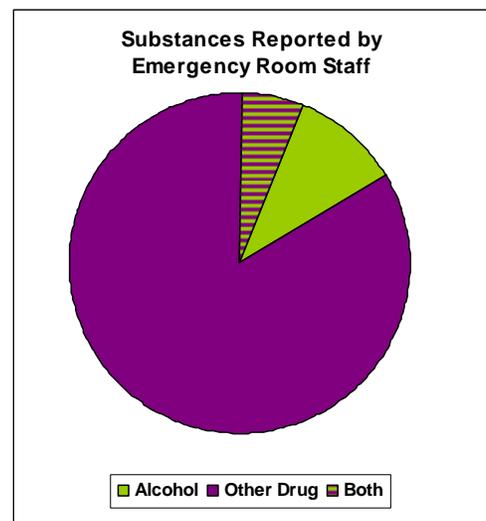
RE: Hospital Emergency Room Episodes with Substance-Related Diagnoses

This week's PIP provides information on the rate at which people served by emergency rooms in Vermont general hospitals were identified as having a substance-related diagnosis (alcohol or other drug). Findings are presented on a monthly basis in order to highlight potential seasonal variation and/or long term trends.

Analysis is based on extracts from the Hospital Discharge Data Set maintained by the Vermont Department of Health. This data set describes all emergency room episodes reported by Vermont's 14 general hospitals during January 2003 through December 2004. In order to account for the varying number of days per month during the year, the average number of substance-related emergency room episodes per day during each month of the year is reported. In order to account for possible variation in the overall number of emergency room episodes during the months of the year, episodes with substance-related diagnoses are also reported as a percent of all emergency room episodes during each month.

During the study period, emergency room staff reported other drug-related diagnoses much more often than alcohol-related diagnoses. Other drug-related diagnoses were reported for 84% of these episodes. Both alcohol and other drug-related diagnoses were reported for 6% of these episodes. Alcohol-related diagnoses only were reported for 10% of all episodes with a substance-related diagnosis.

As you will see, October had the most emergency room episodes with a substance-related diagnosis during both 2003 and 2004. February had the fewest episodes with a substance-related diagnosis during 2003 and January had the fewest during 2004.

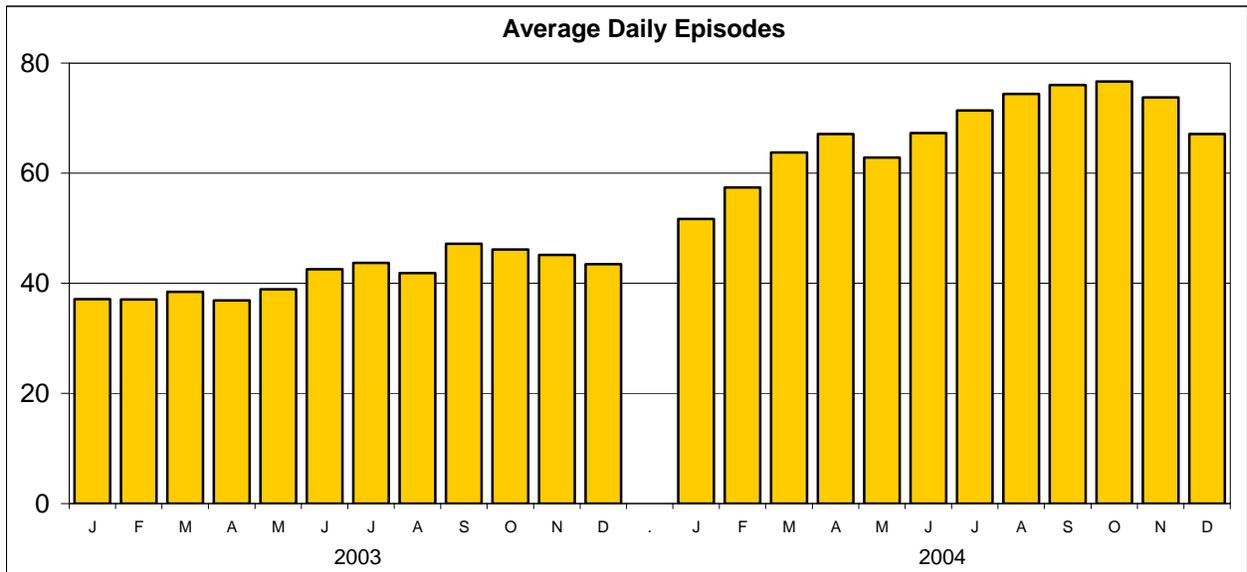
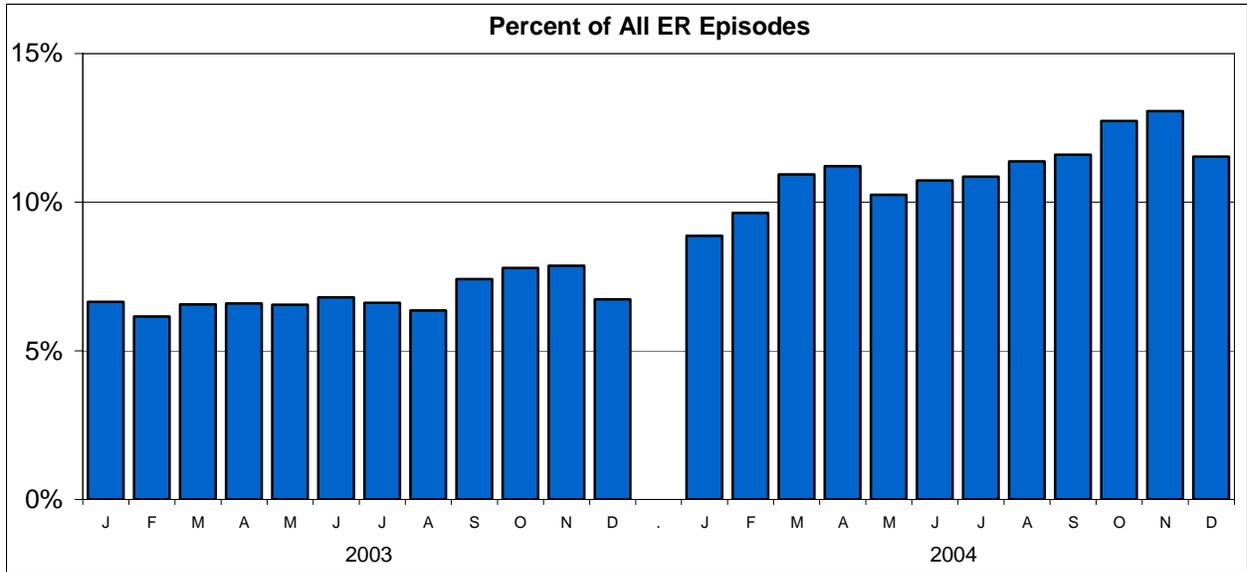


When substance-related emergency room episodes are considered as a percent of all emergency room episodes, October and November had the highest rate during both 2003 (8% in each month) and 2004 (13% in each month).

It is interesting to note that there was substantial growth between 2003 and 2004 in both the number of emergency room episodes with a substance-related diagnosis (63% increase, from 15,167 to 24,693) and the percent of all emergency room episodes with a substance-related diagnosis (62% increase, from 7% to 11%). It is not clear from these data whether this reflects an increase in substance abuse among emergency room patients or an increase in sensitivity to substance use among emergency room staff.

We look forward to your interpretation of these findings and your suggestions for further analysis of this comprehensive data set. Please forward your comments and suggestions to pip@vdh.state.vt.us or 802.863.7249.

Emergency Room Episodes with Substance-Related Diagnoses



	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Total ER Episodes	2003	221,912	17,315	16,842	18,168	16,795	18,414	18,795	20,451	20,398	19,109	18,369	17,239	20,017
	2004	223,213	18,071	17,271	18,081	17,970	19,017	18,829	20,377	20,290	19,665	18,662	16,947	18,033

ER Episodes with Substance-Related Diagnoses

	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Number of Episodes	2003	15,167	1,151	1,037	1,192	1,107	1,206	1,277	1,354	1,297	1,415	1,430	1,354	1,347
	2004	24,693	1,602	1,665	1,976	2,014	1,948	2,019	2,213	2,306	2,281	2,376	2,213	2,080
Percent of Total	2003	7%	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%	7%
	2004	11%	9%	10%	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	12%	13%	13%	12%
Avg Daily Episodes	2003	42	37	37	38	37	39	43	44	42	47	46	45	43
	2004	68	52	57	64	67	63	67	71	74	76	77	74	67

Information for this analysis was extracted from the Hospital Discharge data set for 2003 and 2004.