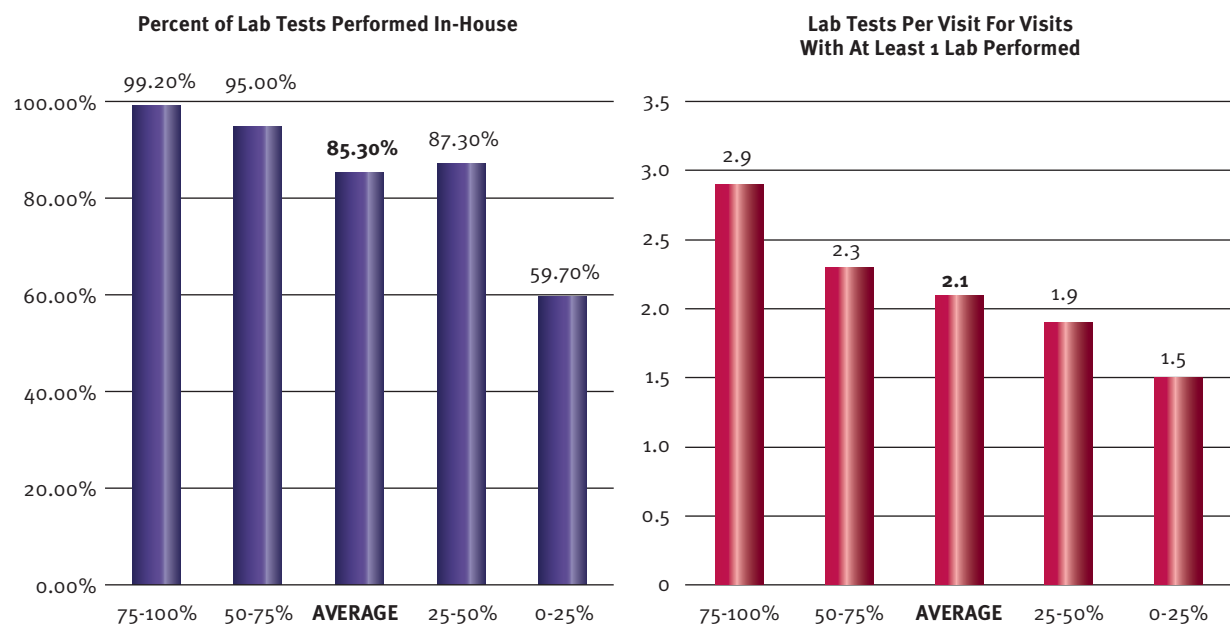


DEVELOPING DATA

Diagnostic Lab Test Utilization in Urgent Care

■ Alan A. Ayers, MBA, MAcc



By quartile among visits including labs
Source: Experity EMR data January 1 to December 31, 2024

Urgent care has long been defined by its model of “test and treat” for minor, non-chronic health conditions. Patients presenting with symptoms typically receive a rapid, on-site lab test, and based on the results, the provider makes a diagnosis and orders a prescription. It’s a given that lab testing is a defining service and core capability of urgent care centers.

Based on 34 million patient charts in Experity EMR from



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January 1 through December 31, 2024, approximately 43% of visits involved a lab on average. Of those visits with a lab, more than 85% on average were labs performed in-house, and the average visit with labs involved roughly 2 tests.

The charts illustrate variances among 3,015 centers in the percentage of lab tests that are performed in-house and the average number of lab tests performed per visit. Sorting each datapoint from high to low, the charts illustrate each field by quartile as well as the average for all centers.

It’s important to note that lab utilization is affected by multiple factors including the services offered—for example, orthopedic injuries or skin conditions may not require a lab—as well as patient expectations, prevalence of communicable disease, and provider behavior. ■