

Emergency Care Analysis

Emergency Care: Introduction

This section reviews detailed operating statistics of reporting emergency care institutions in the St. Louis City and County area (see Appendix B for a list of 2020 reporting emergency care organizations). All of the reporting organizations are hospital emergency departments. Organizations report total encounters and users, as well as inpatient admissions, non-emergent encounters, left without being seen rates, left against medical advice rates and behavioral health emergency care encounters.

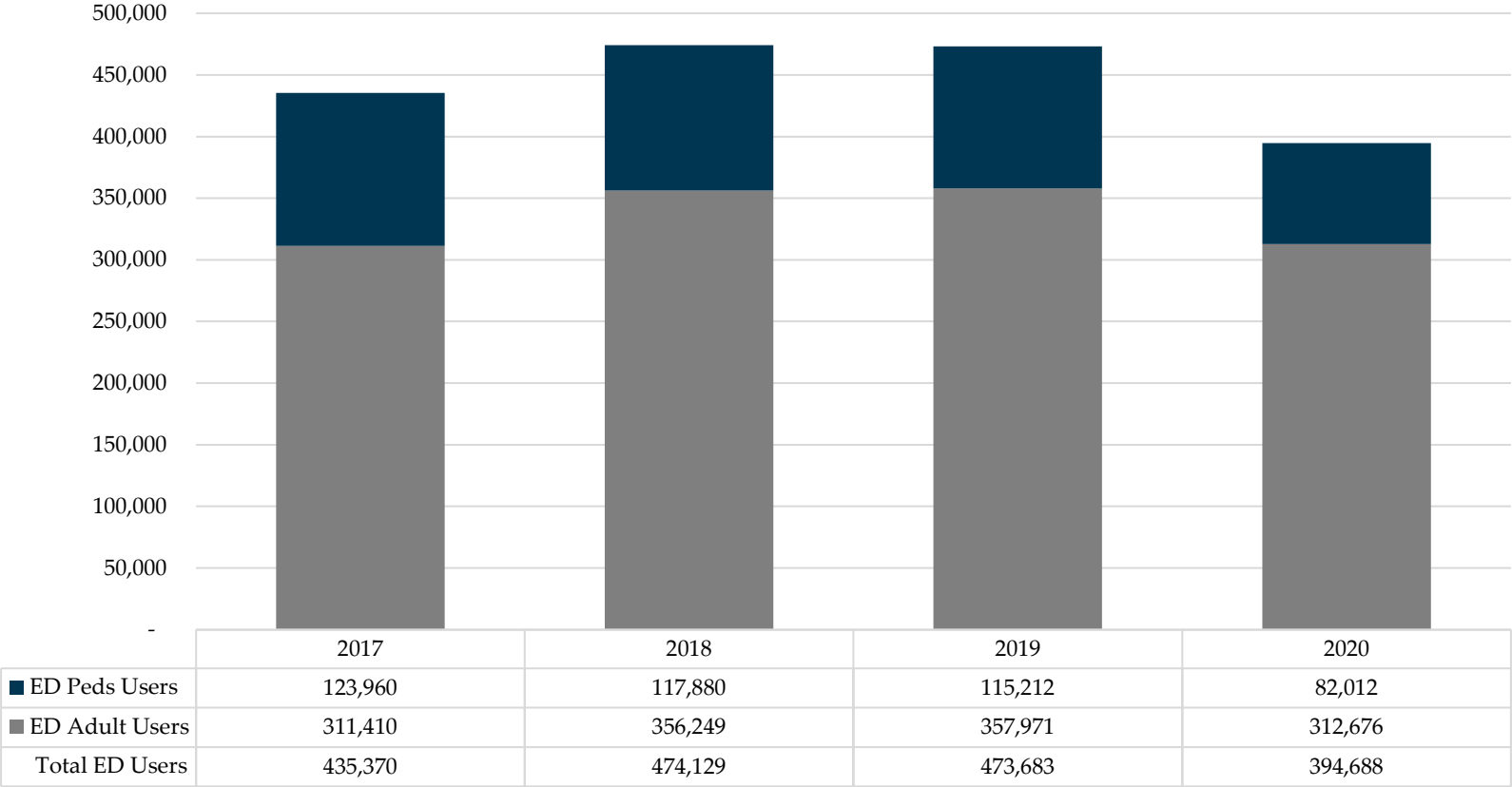
Gateway to Better Health is a limited coverage model that does not include reimbursement for emergency care services. Therefore, emergency department encounters and user volumes occurring among Gateway enrollees in calendar year 2020 are captured in the “uninsured” payor category of the figures presented.

Emergency Care: Key Findings

- Total emergency department encounters have declined by 18% over the past year. Uninsured emergency department encounters at St. Louis area hospitals have decreased by 13% from 2017 to 2020 (pages 55 and 59).
- Non-emergent encounters have decreased by 28% over the past year. Non-emergent encounters decreased by 39%, 28%, 23%, and 22% among uninsured, Medicaid, Medicare, and privately insured patients, respectively, over the past year (page 62).
- Approximately 14,700 patients visiting St. Louis area emergency departments had at least four emergency department visits at the same hospital, representing 4% of all emergency department patients in 2020 (page 67). Among these patients, there were more than 84,565 emergency department encounters in 2020 (page 68).
- Emergency department encounters with behavioral health diagnoses (primary) have decreased by 10% and account for 7% of all emergency department encounters in 2020 (page 69). The top primary behavioral health diagnoses are mood disorders, schizophrenia/delusional disorders, and alcohol use disorders (page 70).

Emergency care users decreased by 17% over the past year.

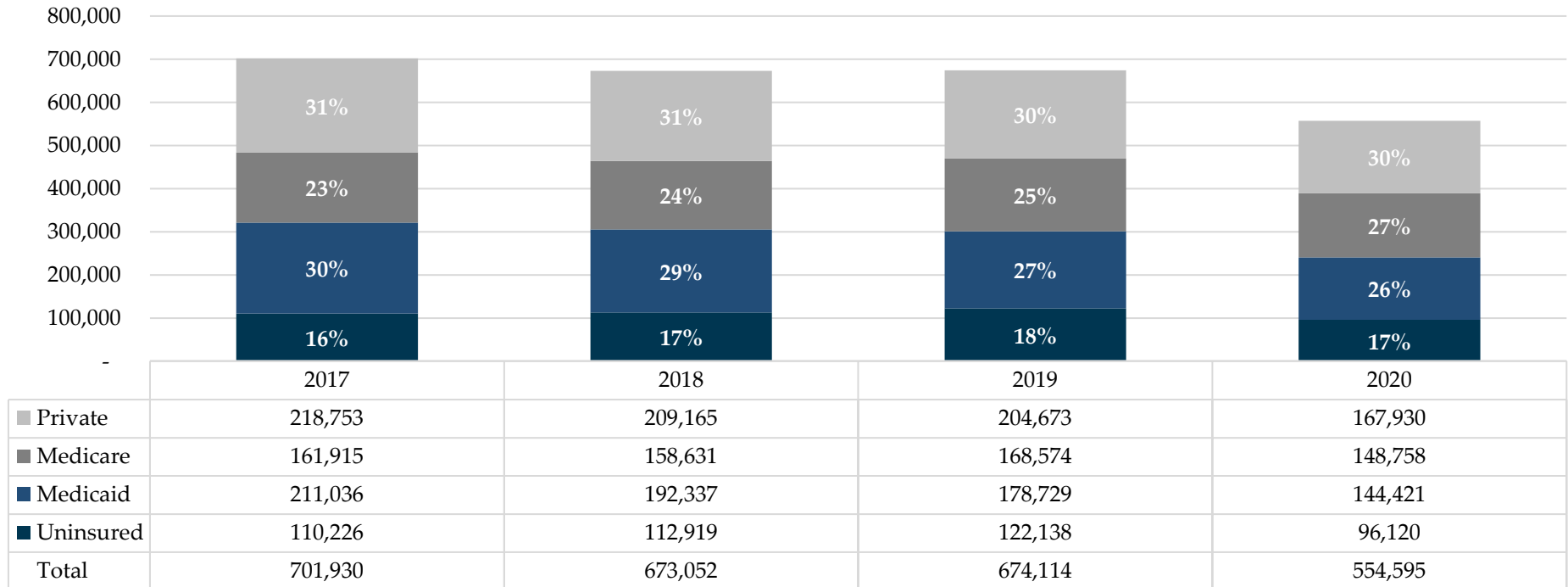
Emergency Care Users by Type, 2017 - 2020



- Pediatric users make up 21% of all users in 2020, compared to 24% in 2019.
- Adult users make up 79% of all users in 2020, compared to 76% in 2019.

Emergency care encounters have declined by 18% over the past year.

Emergency Department Encounters by Payor Category, 2017 - 2020

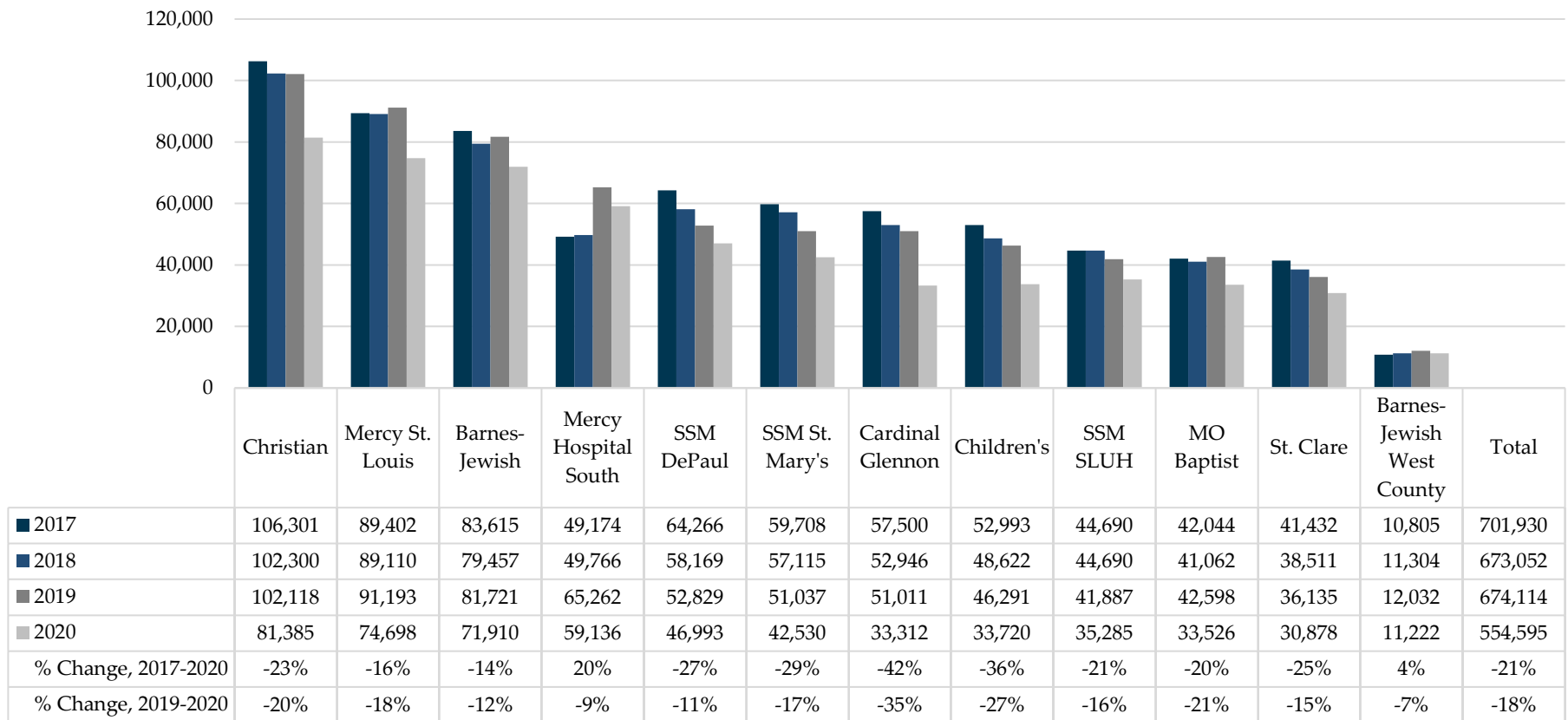


- Of the more than 554,500 emergency care encounters reported in 2020, 30% were among those privately insured, 27% were among the Medicare population, 26% were among the Medicaid population, and 17% were among the uninsured.
- Emergency care encounters at safety net hospitals have decreased by 21% (approximately 147,300 encounters) since 2017.

Note: For the purpose of this report, all Gateway to Better Health encounters and users are reported as uninsured.

Emergency department encounters decreased by 18% at St. Louis area emergency departments over the past year.

Total Emergency Department Encounters by Organization, 2017 - 2020

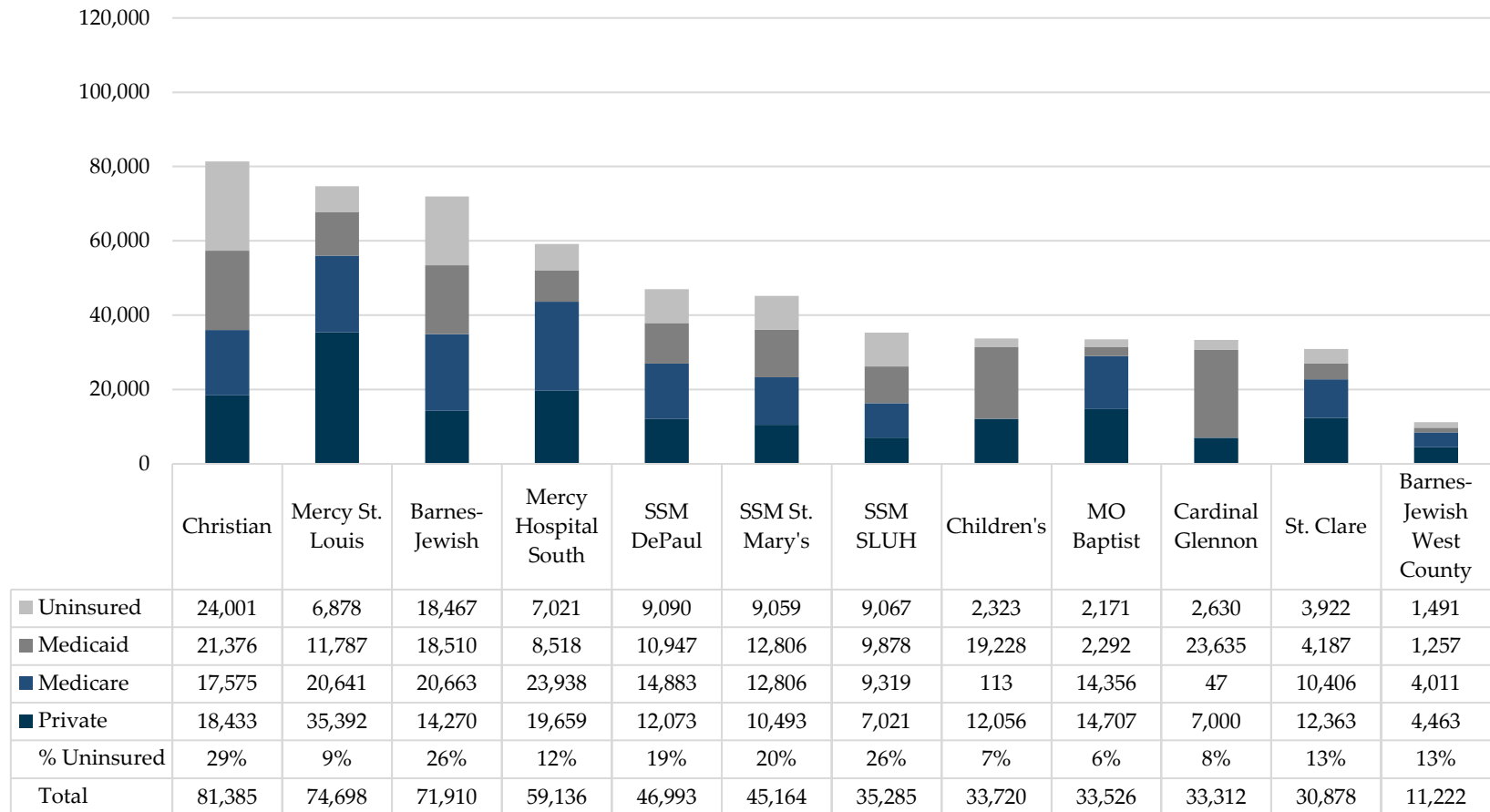


- Total emergency department encounters decreased by 7% or more at eight organizations over the past year: Mercy St. Louis (18%), SSM St. Mary's (17%), SSM SLUH (16%), St. Clare (15%), Barnes-Jewish (12%), SSM DePaul (11%), Mercy Hospital South (9%), and Barnes-Jewish West County (7%).
- Total emergency department encounters decreased by 20% more at four organizations over the past year: Cardinal Glennon (35%), MO Baptist (21%), Children's (27%), and Christian (20%).

Note: Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare.

Emergency department encounters among the uninsured and Medicaid populations varied greatly by hospital emergency department.

Emergency Department Encounter by Payor Category and Organization, 2020

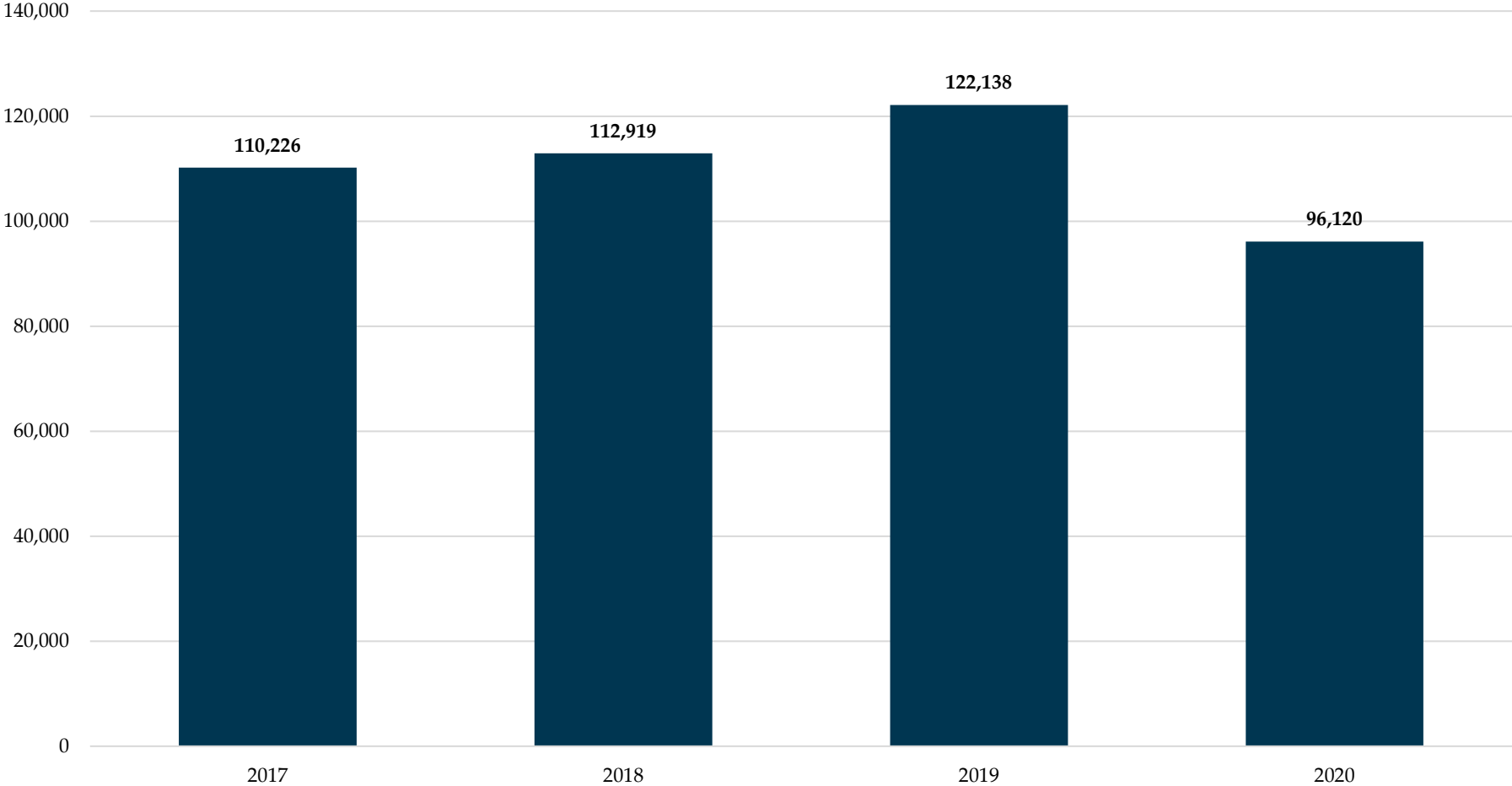


- Four hospitals (Christian, Barnes-Jewish, SSM SLUH, SSM St. Mary's) have payor mixes with 20% or greater uninsured emergency department encounters.
- More than 44% of Medicaid encounters were provided by three hospitals (Cardinal Glennon, Christian, and Children's). St. Louis Children's and Cardinal Glennon primarily serve pediatric populations.

Note: Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare.

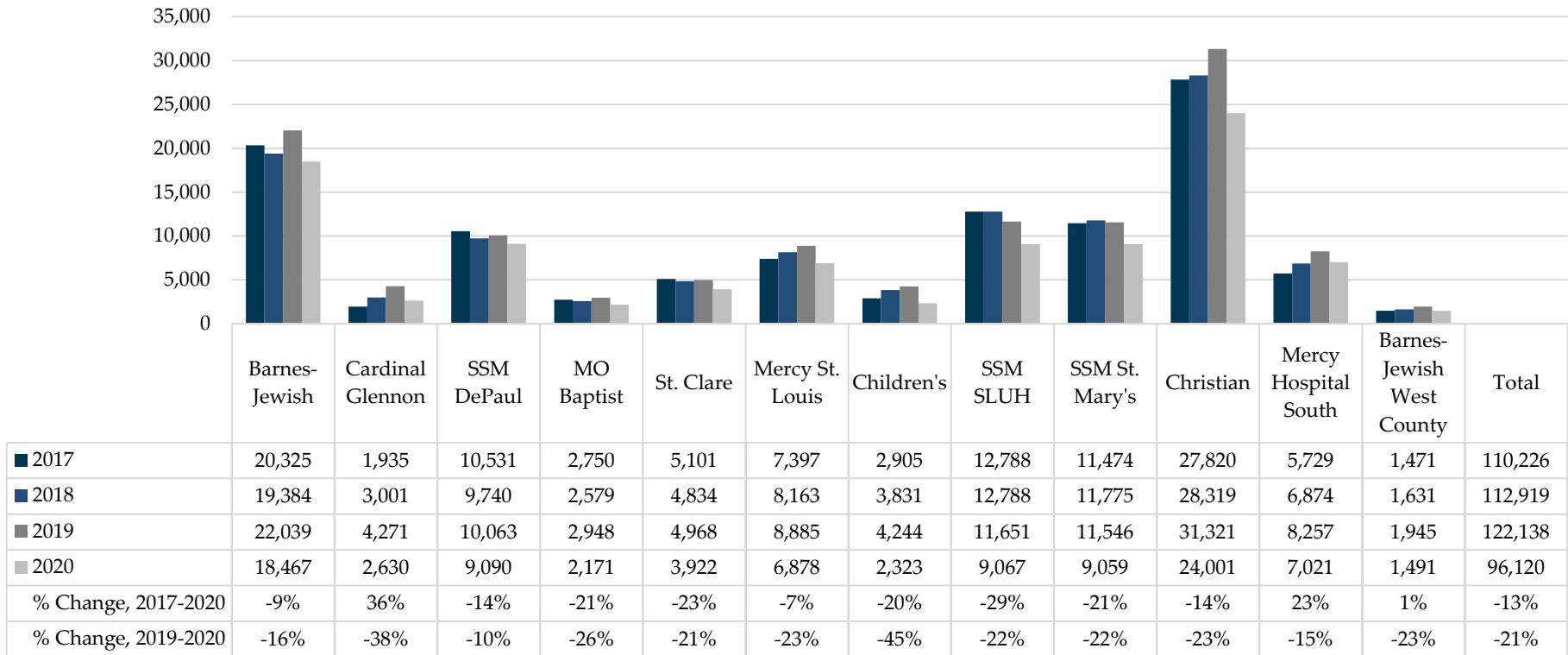
Uninsured emergency department encounters decreased by 21% over the past year, representing 17% of emergency department encounters.

Uninsured Emergency Department Encounters, 2017 - 2020



Three hospitals (Christian, Barnes-Jewish, and SSM DePaul) provided nearly 54% of all uninsured emergency department encounters in 2020.

Uninsured Emergency Department Encounters by Organization, 2017 - 2020

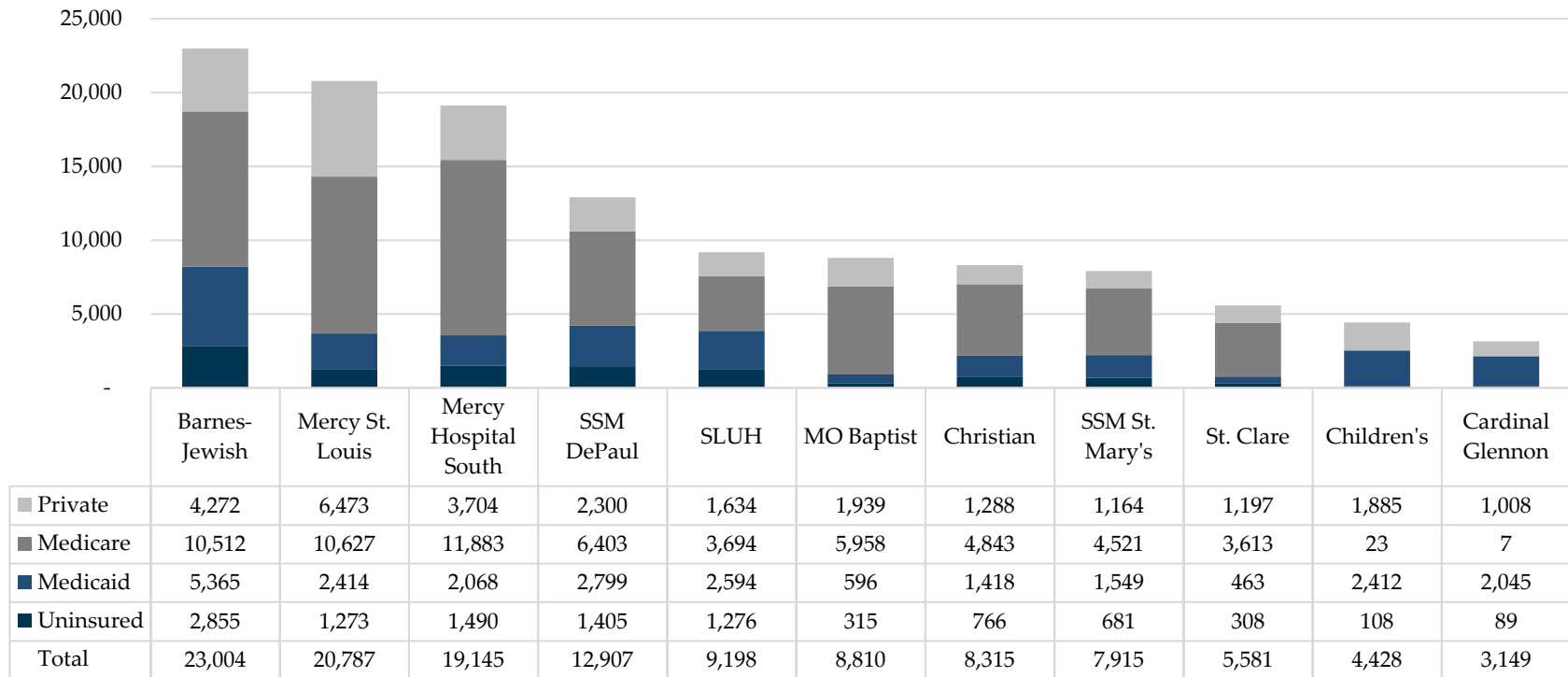


- Nine organizations had more than a 20% decrease in uninsured emergency department encounters over the past year: Children's (45%), Cardinal Glennon (38%), MO Baptist (26%), Mercy St. Louis (23%), Christian (23%), Barnes-Jewish West County (23%), SSM St. Mary's (22%), SSM SLUH (22%), and St. Clare (21%).
- Uninsured emergency department encounters decreased over the past year at each St. Louis area hospital with safety net providers.

Note: Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare.

Approximately 23% of patients in emergency departments throughout the St. Louis region were admitted in 2020, as compared to 20% in 2020.

Inpatient Admissions by Payor Category and Organization, 2020

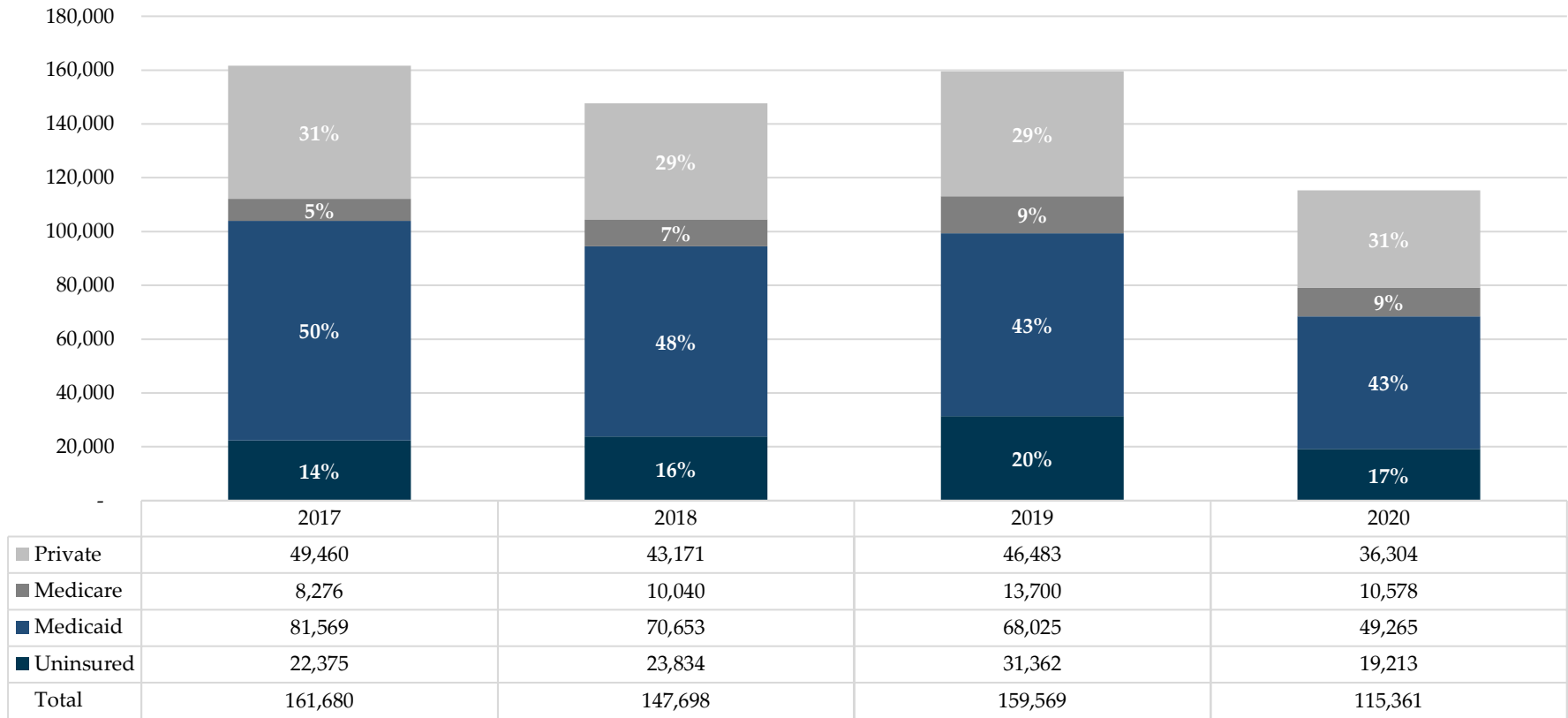


Emergency department encounters that were converted to inpatient admissions represent more than 20% of total emergency department encounters at six organizations: Mercy Hospital South (33%), Barnes-Jewish Hospital (32%), Mercy St. Louis (28%), SSM DePaul (28%), MO Baptist (27%), and SSM SLUH (26%).

Note: Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare.

Non-emergent emergency department encounters decreased by 28% over the past year.

Non-Emergent Emergency Department Encounters by Payor Category, 2017 - 2020



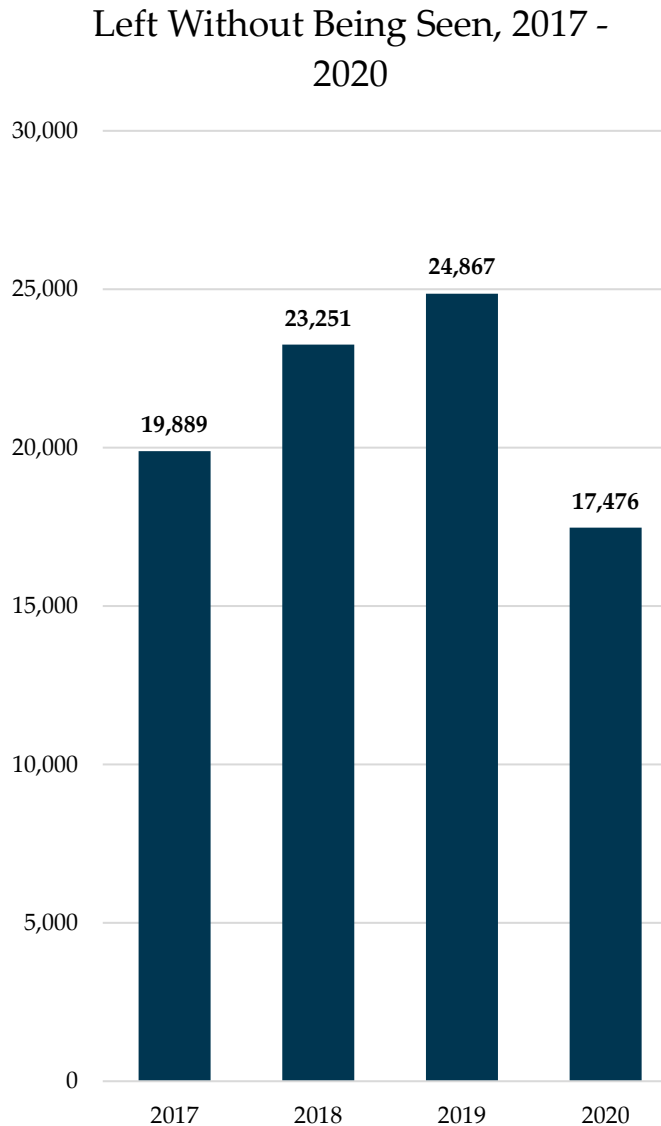
- Of the more than 115,300 non-emergent emergency encounters reported in 2020, 43% were among the Medicaid population, 31% were among those privately insured, 17% were among the uninsured population, and 9% were among the Medicare population.
- Non-emergent emergency department encounters decreased by 39%, 28%, 23%, and 22% among uninsured, Medicaid, Medicare, and privately patients insured, respectively, over the past year.

Note: Many self-reporting organizations define non-emergent encounters using patient acuity ratings assigned during the encounter.

Left without being seen volumes decreased by 30% over the past year.

- Encounters where patients left hospital emergency departments without being seen have decreased by 12% since 2017.
- The approximately 17,400 encounters where patients left hospital emergency departments without being seen represent 3% of all emergency department encounters in the St. Louis region during 2020, which remains consistent with 2020 data.

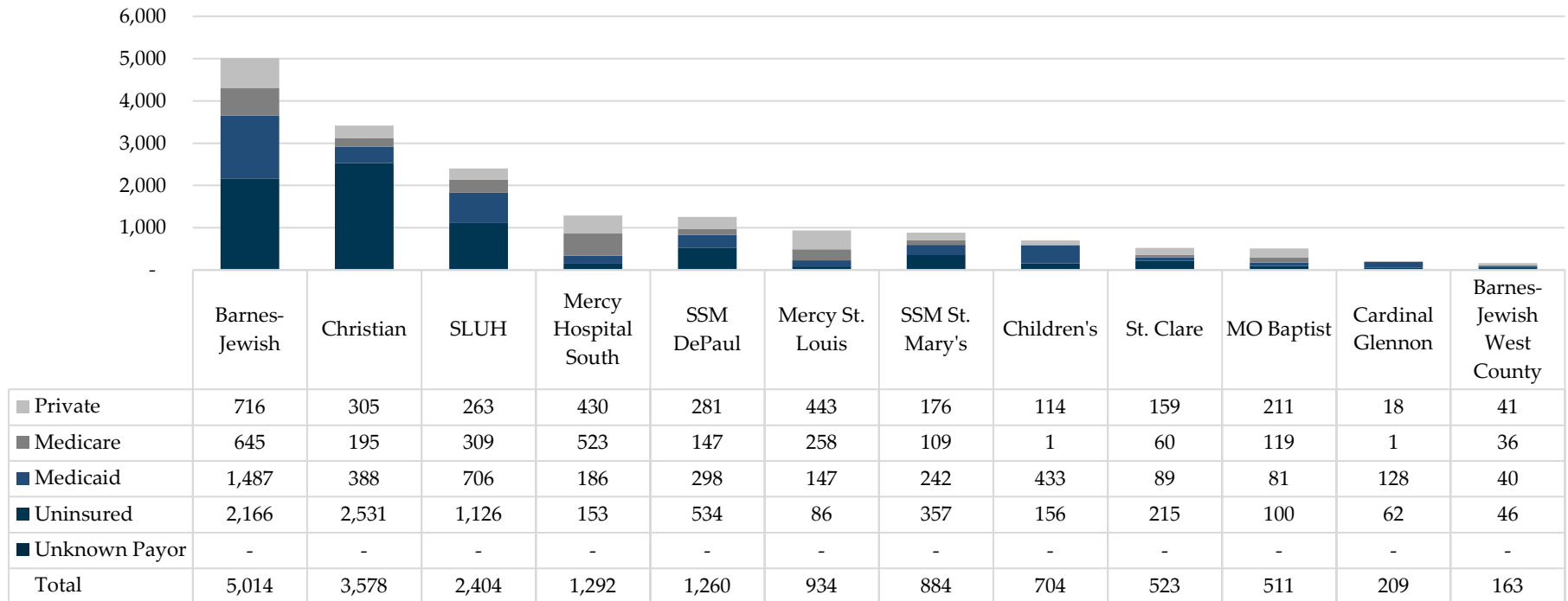
Note: For the purposes of analysis on this page, "all emergency department encounters" includes emergency department encounters with charges, encounters where patients left without being seen, and encounters where patients left against medical advice.



Year	Total LWBS	Total Encounters	%
2017	19,889	701,930	2.8
2018	23,251	673,052	3.5
2019	24,867	674,114	3.7
2020	17,476	554,595	3.1

Left without being seen volumes at hospital emergency departments varied greatly by payor, as information is available.

Left Without Being Seen by Payor Category and Organization, 2020



- All reporting emergency departments had left without being seen rates below 5% of their total emergency department encounters, except for Barnes-Jewish Hospital and SLUH, which had left without being seen rates of 7%, respectively.
- Left without being seen volumes among uninsured patients represent 43% of the total left without being seen volume for the St. Louis region in 2020.

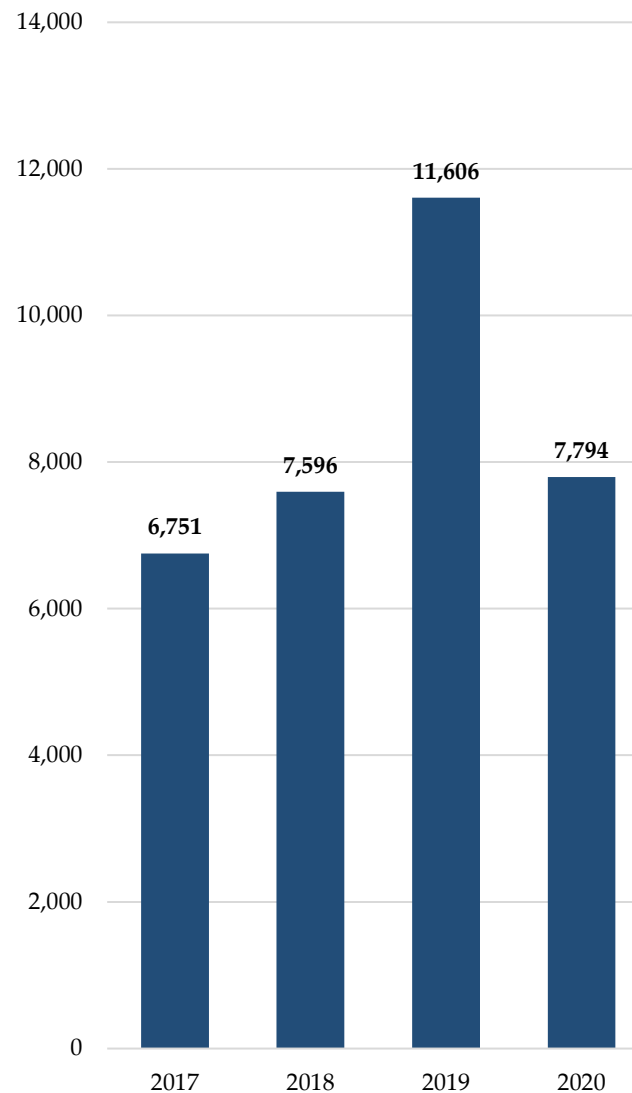
Note: For the purposes of analysis on this page, "total emergency department encounters" includes emergency department encounters with charges, encounters where patients left without being seen, and encounters where patients left against medical advice. Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare.

Left against medical advice volumes have increased by 15% over the past four years.

- In 2020, across the St. Louis region, there were approximately 7,700 encounters where patients left hospital emergency departments against medical advice, a decrease of 33% as compared to the 2019 rate.
- Encounters where patients left hospital emergency departments against medical advice represent 1% of all emergency department encounters in the St. Louis region during 2020, which is consistent with 2020 data.

Note: For the purposes of analysis on this page, "all emergency department encounters" includes emergency department encounters with charges, encounters where patients left without being seen, and encounters where patients left against medical advice.

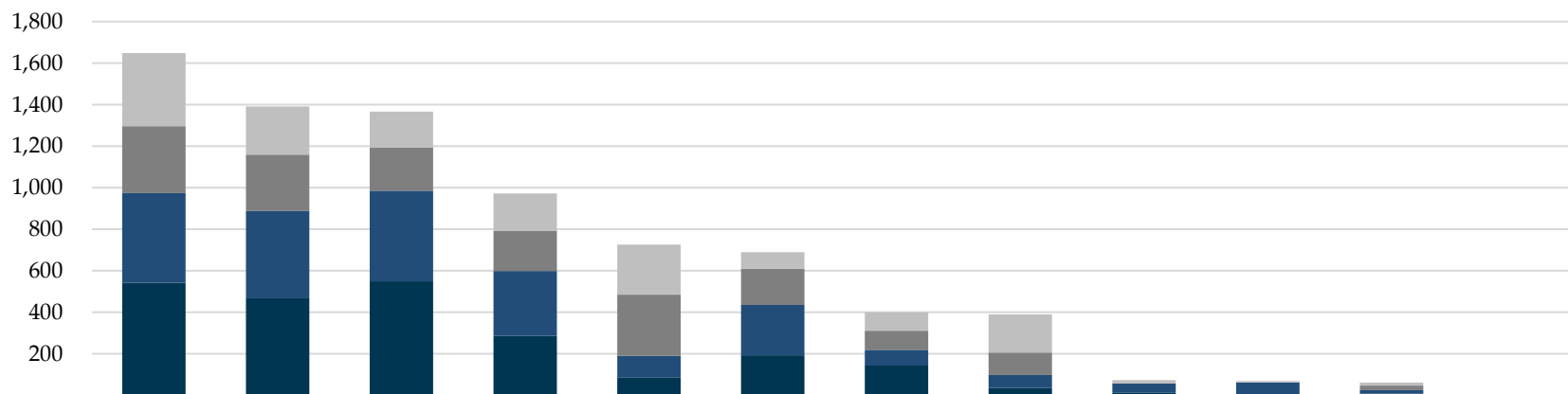
Left Against Medical Advice, 2017 - 2020



Year	Total LAMA	Total Encounters	%
2017	6,751	701,930	0.9
2018	7,596	673,052	1.1
2019	11,606	674,114	1.7
2020	7,794	554,595	1.4

Left against medical advice volumes at hospital emergency departments varied greatly by payor, as information is available.

Left Against Medical Advice by Payor Category and Organization, 2020



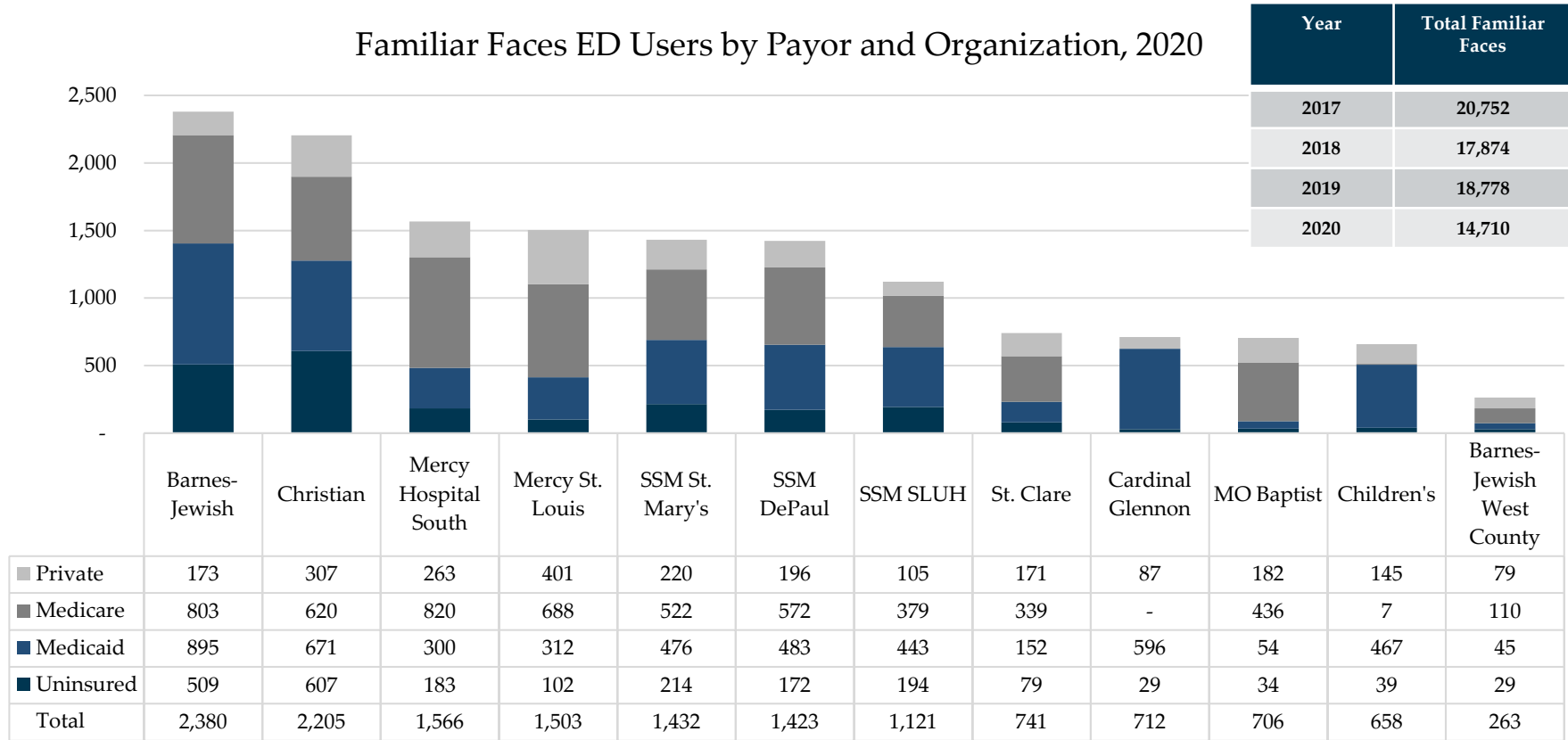
	SSM DePaul	Christian	SSM SLUH	SSM St. Mary's	Mercy Hospital South	Barnes-Jewish	St. Clare	Mercy St. Louis	Children's	Cardinal Glennon	Barnes-Jewish West County	MO Baptist
Private	352	231	172	181	241	80	89	185	16	7	14	1
Medicare	323	271	208	192	294	174	93	108	-	-	23	1
Medicaid	432	421	437	312	105	242	75	62	45	55	16	-
Uninsured	542	468	549	287	86	194	144	36	13	7	9	-
Unknown Payor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,649	1,392	1,366	972	726	690	401	391	74	69	62	2

- All reporting emergency departments had left against medical advice rates that were below 5% of their total emergency department encounters.
- Left against medical advice volumes among uninsured patients represent 30% of the total left against medical advice volume for the St. Louis region in 2020.

Note: For the purposes of analysis on this page, "total emergency department encounters" includes emergency department encounters with charges, encounters where patients left without being seen and encounters where patients left against medical advice. Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare.

Approximately 14,700 patients visiting St. Louis area emergency departments in 2020 had four or more emergency department visits at the same hospital in the 2020 calendar year, which is a 22% decrease from the prior year.

Familiar Faces ED Users by Payor and Organization, 2020

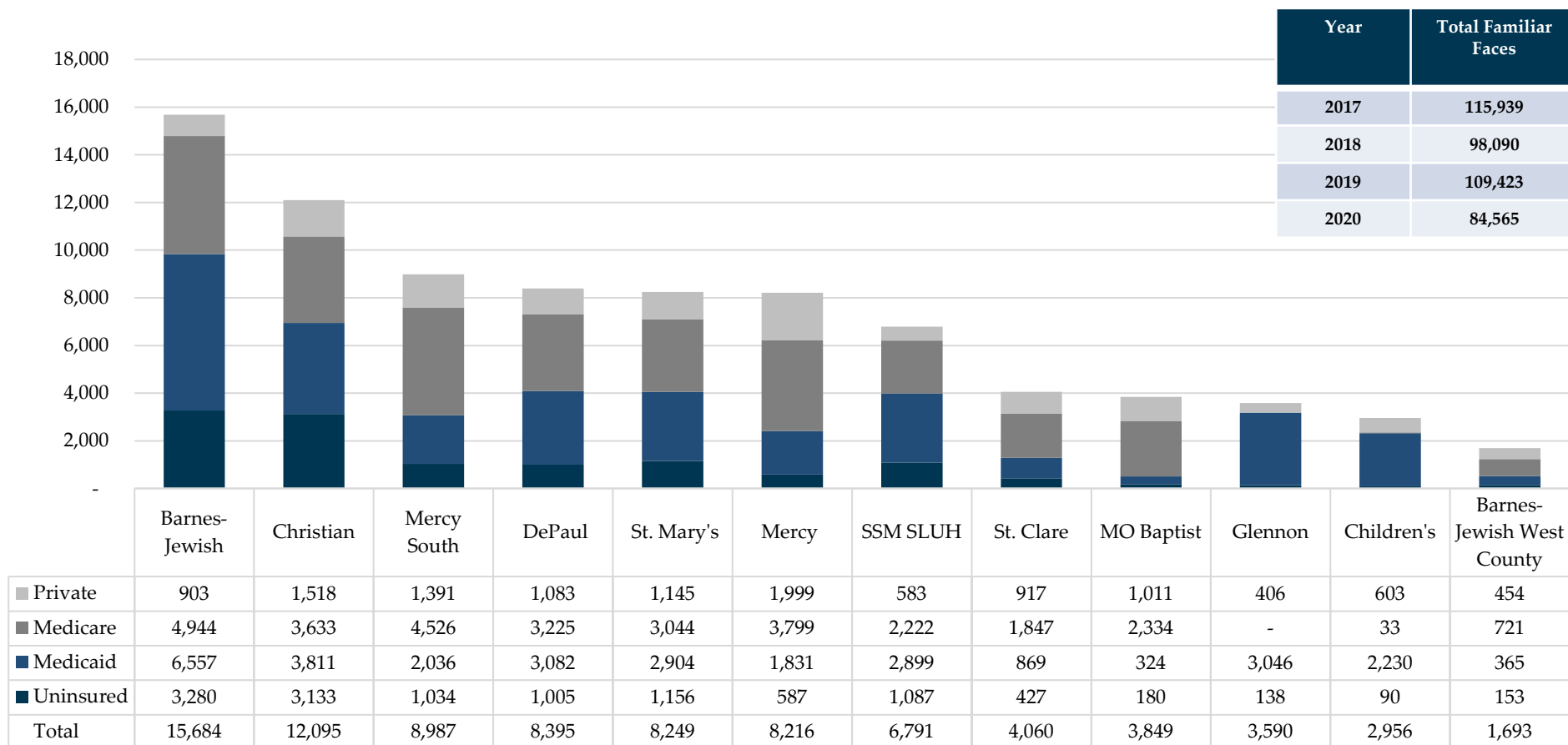


- Of the nearly 14,700 returning emergency department users reported in 2020, 36% were among Medicare patients, 33% were among Medicaid patients, 16% were among privately insured patients, and 15% were among uninsured patients.
- Familiar faces represent 4% of all patients who visited a St. Louis area emergency department in 2020, and account for 84,500 visits.

Note: Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare. A "familiar face" is any patient that has four or more emergency department visits at the same hospital.

The 14,700 patients identified as familiar faces had 84,565 emergency department encounters at St. Louis area hospitals in 2020, which is a 23% decrease from the prior year.

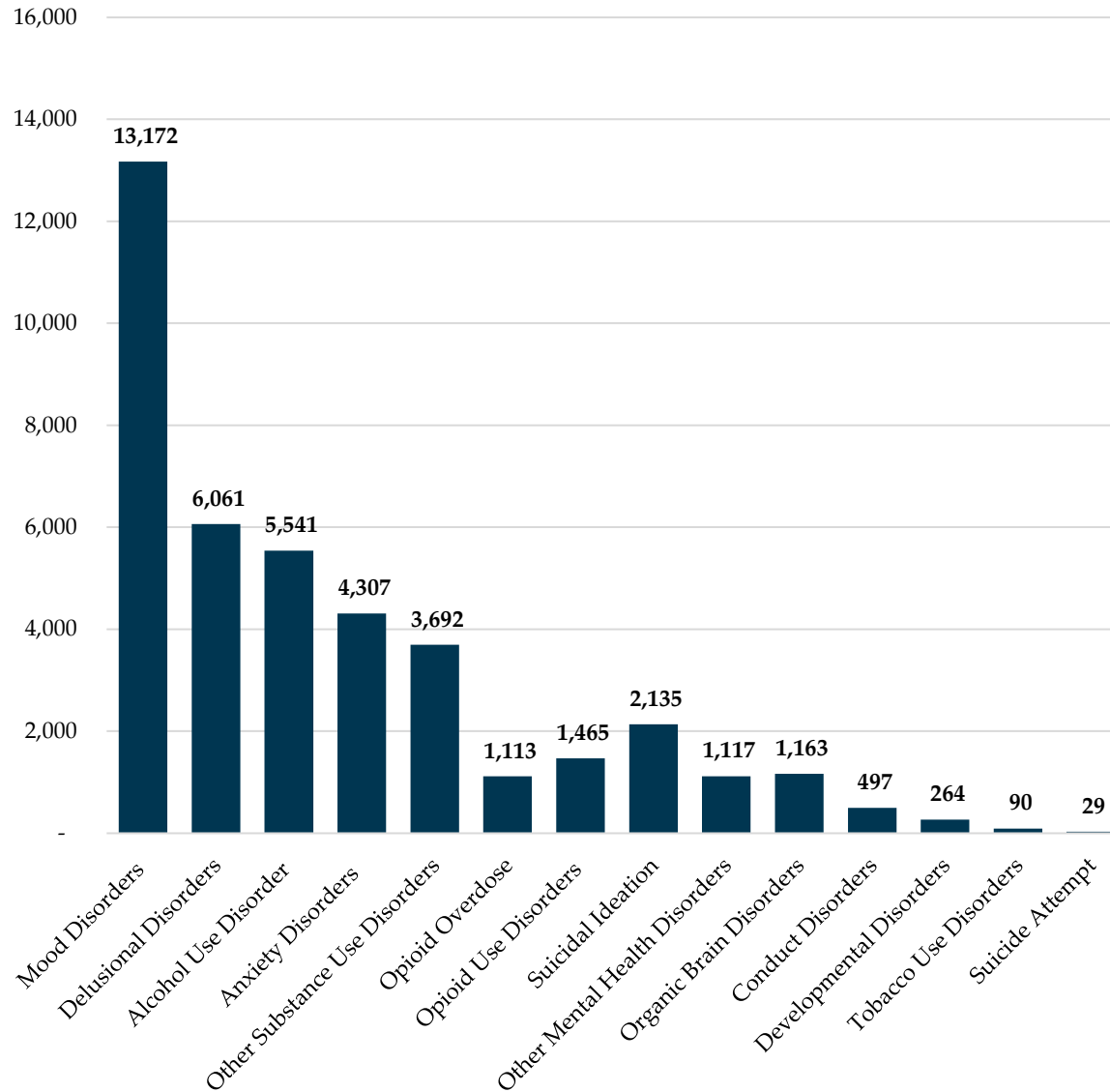
Familiar Faces ED Encounters by Payor and Organization, 2020



- Of the nearly 84,500 emergency department encounters among returning users reported in 2020, 36% were among Medicare patients, 35% among Medicaid patients, 15% were among uninsured patients, and 14% were among privately insured patients.
- Emergency department encounters among returning users represent 17% of all emergency department encounters in the St. Louis region during 2020, compared to 16% of all emergency department encounters in 2019.

Note: Christian Hospital's figures include data for both sites, Christian Northeast and Northwest Healthcare. A "familiar face" is any patient that has four or more emergency department visits at the same hospital.

Primary Behavioral Health Diagnoses for Emergency Department Encounters, 2020



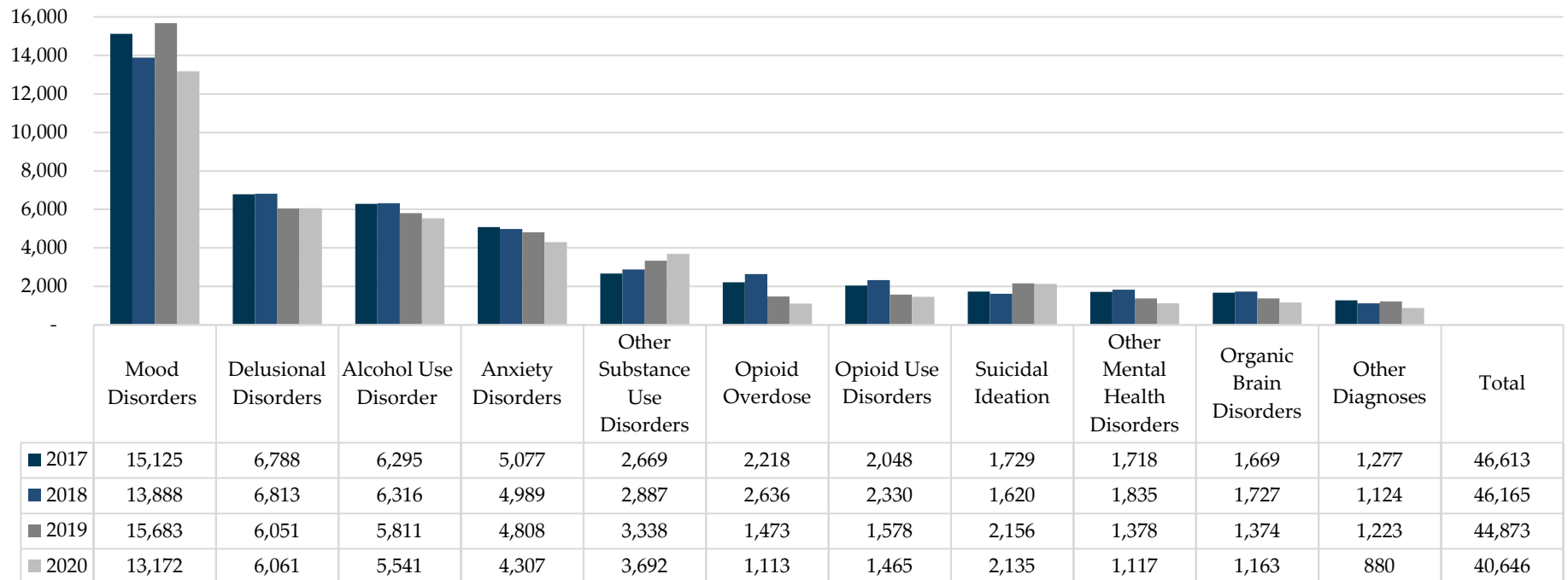
Emergency department encounters with primary behavioral health diagnoses account for more than 40,600 (7%) of total emergency department encounters in 2020.

Mood disorders (32%), schizophrenia/delusional disorders (15%), and alcohol use disorders (14%) are the main primary behavioral health diagnoses presenting to St. Louis area emergency departments.

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Distribution of behavioral health diagnosis codes within emergency departments are based on billing/coding data and may not be reflective of diagnoses prevalence in the region or experiences in the emergency departments.

Opioid overdose and opioid use disorders decreased by 24% and 7%, respectively, over the past year.

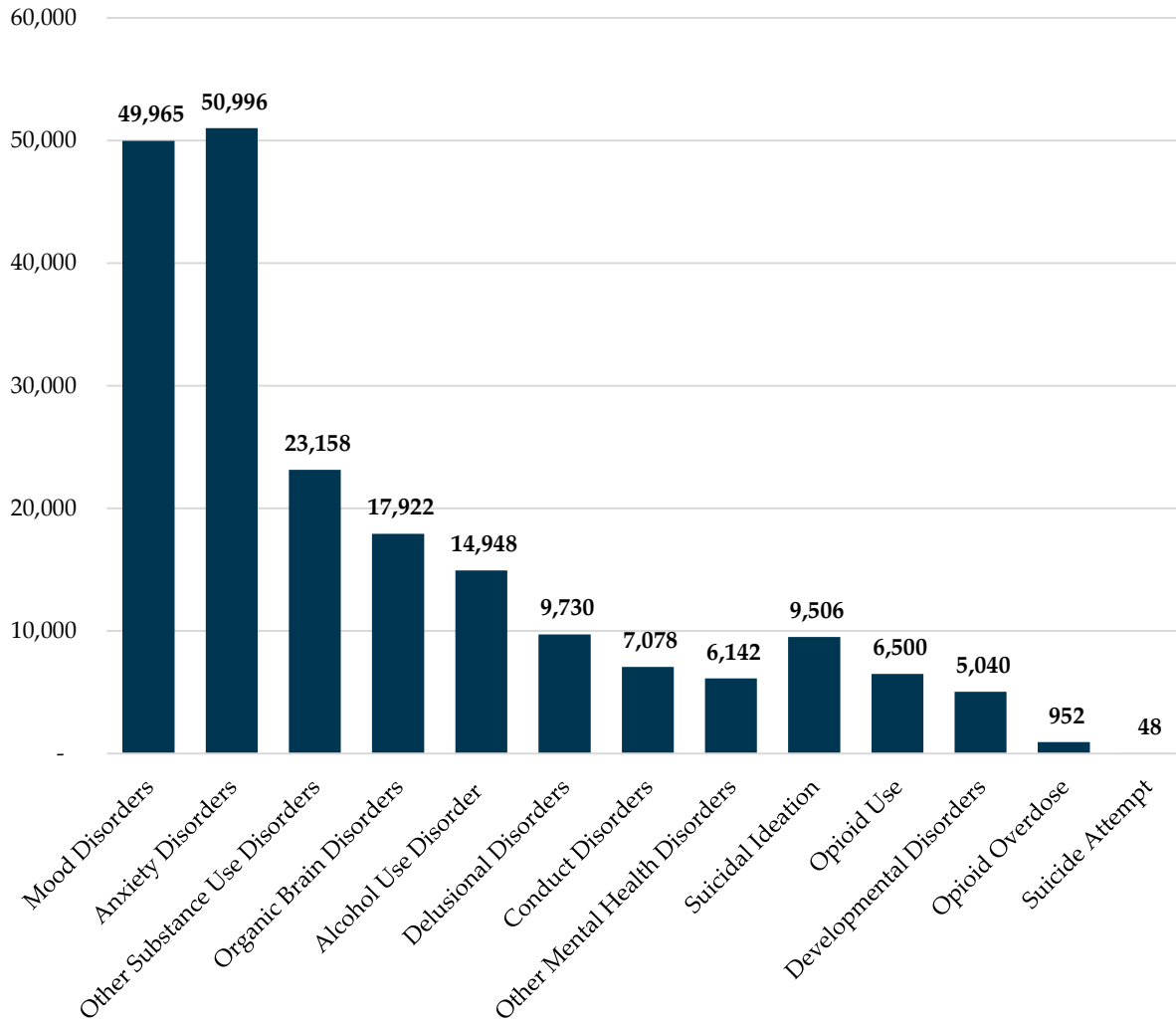
Primary Behavioral Health Diagnoses for Emergency Department Encounters, 2017 - 2020



- The total number of primary behavioral health diagnoses for emergency department encounters decreased by 10% over the past year.
- Other Substance Use Disorders increased by 11% over the past year.
- Five behavioral health diagnoses decreased by 10% or more over the past year: Other Diagnoses (28%), Other Mental Health Disorders (19%), Mood Disorders (16%), Organic Brain Disorders (15%), and Anxiety Disorders (10%).

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Duplication across emergency department encounters does exist to account for both the primary and secondary diagnoses on each encounter. Distribution of behavioral health diagnosis codes within emergency departments are based on billing/coding data and may not be reflective of diagnoses prevalence in the region or experiences in the emergency departments. The 'Other Diagnoses' category includes conduct disorders, tobacco use disorders, developmental disorders, and suicide attempts.

Secondary Behavioral Health Diagnoses for Emergency Department Encounters, 2020



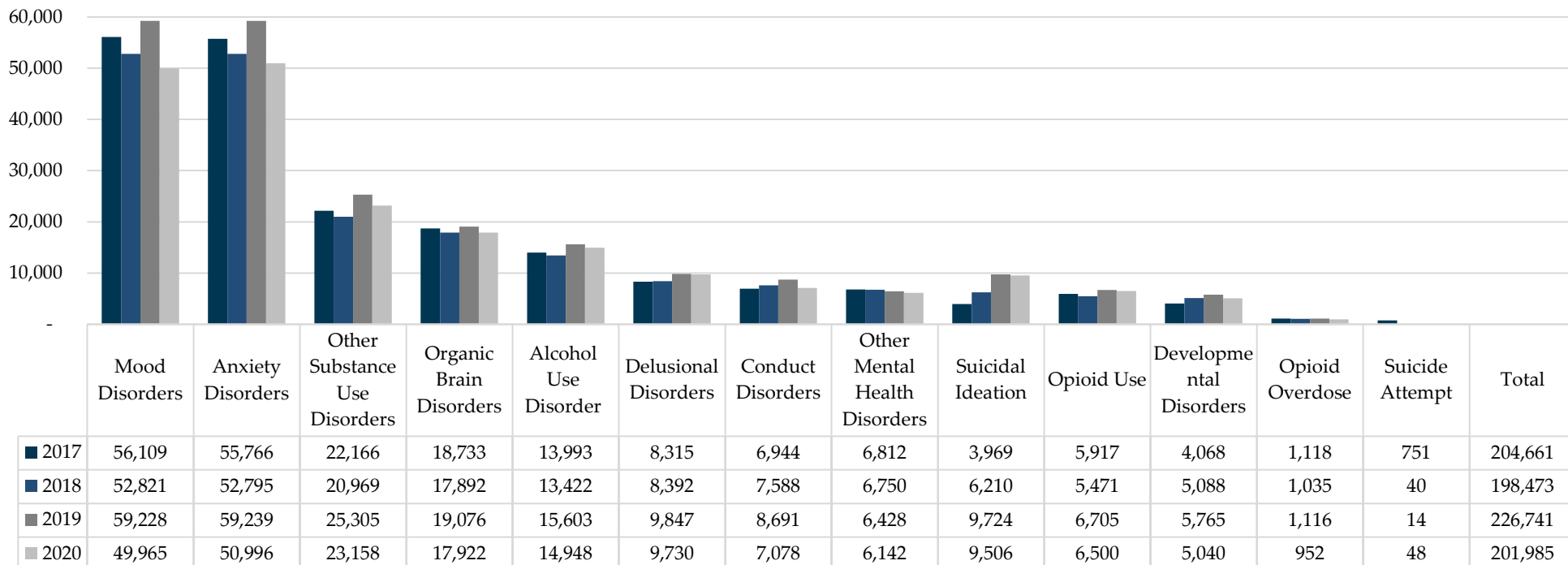
Emergency department encounters with secondary behavioral health diagnoses account for more than 201,900 (36%) of total emergency department encounters in 2020.

Mood and anxiety disorders make up to 50% of all secondary emergency department behavioral health diagnoses in 2020.

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Distribution of behavioral health diagnosis codes within emergency departments are based on billing/coding data and may not be reflective of diagnoses prevalence in the region or experiences in the emergency departments.

The number of secondary behavioral health diagnoses for emergency department encounters have decreased by 11% over the past year.

Secondary Behavioral Health Diagnoses for Emergency Department Encounters, 2017 - 2020



- Seven behavioral health diagnoses decreased by 5% or more over the past year: Conduct Disorders (19%) Mood Disorders (16%), Opioid Overdose (15%), Anxiety Disorders (14%), Developmental Disorders (13%), Other Substance Use Disorders (8%), and Organic Brain Disorders (6%).
- Suicide Attempts increased by 243% over the past year.

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Duplication across emergency department encounters does exist to account for both the primary and secondary diagnoses on each encounter. Distribution of behavioral health diagnosis codes within emergency departments are based on billing/coding data and may not be reflective of diagnoses prevalence in the region or experiences in the emergency departments. The 'Other Diagnoses' category includes conduct disorders, tobacco use disorders, developmental disorders and suicide attempts.

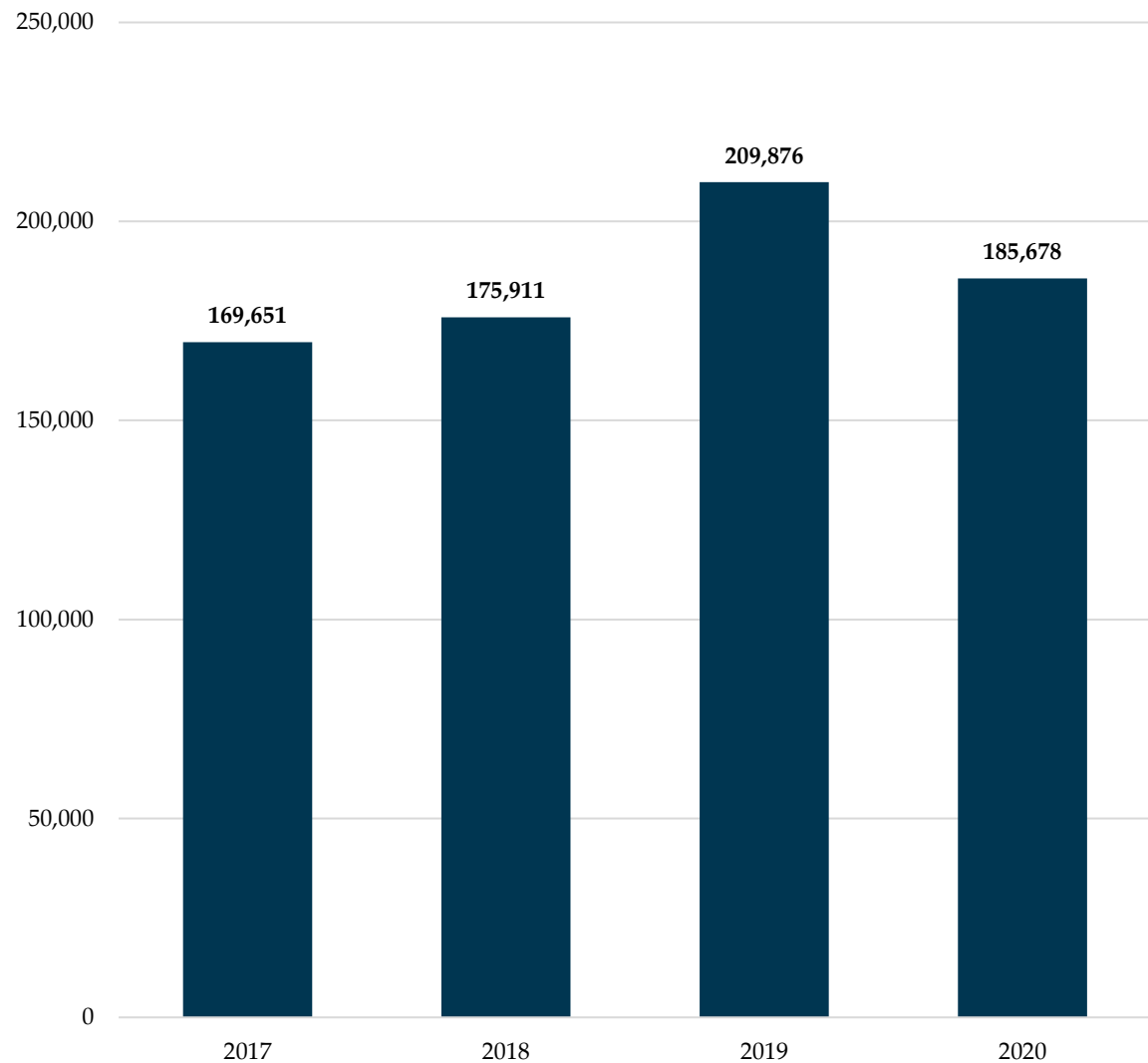
Emergency department encounters with primary or secondary behavioral health diagnoses decreased by 12% over the past year and account for 33% of total emergency department encounters in 2020.

Behavioral health emergency department encounters have increased by 9% over the past four years.

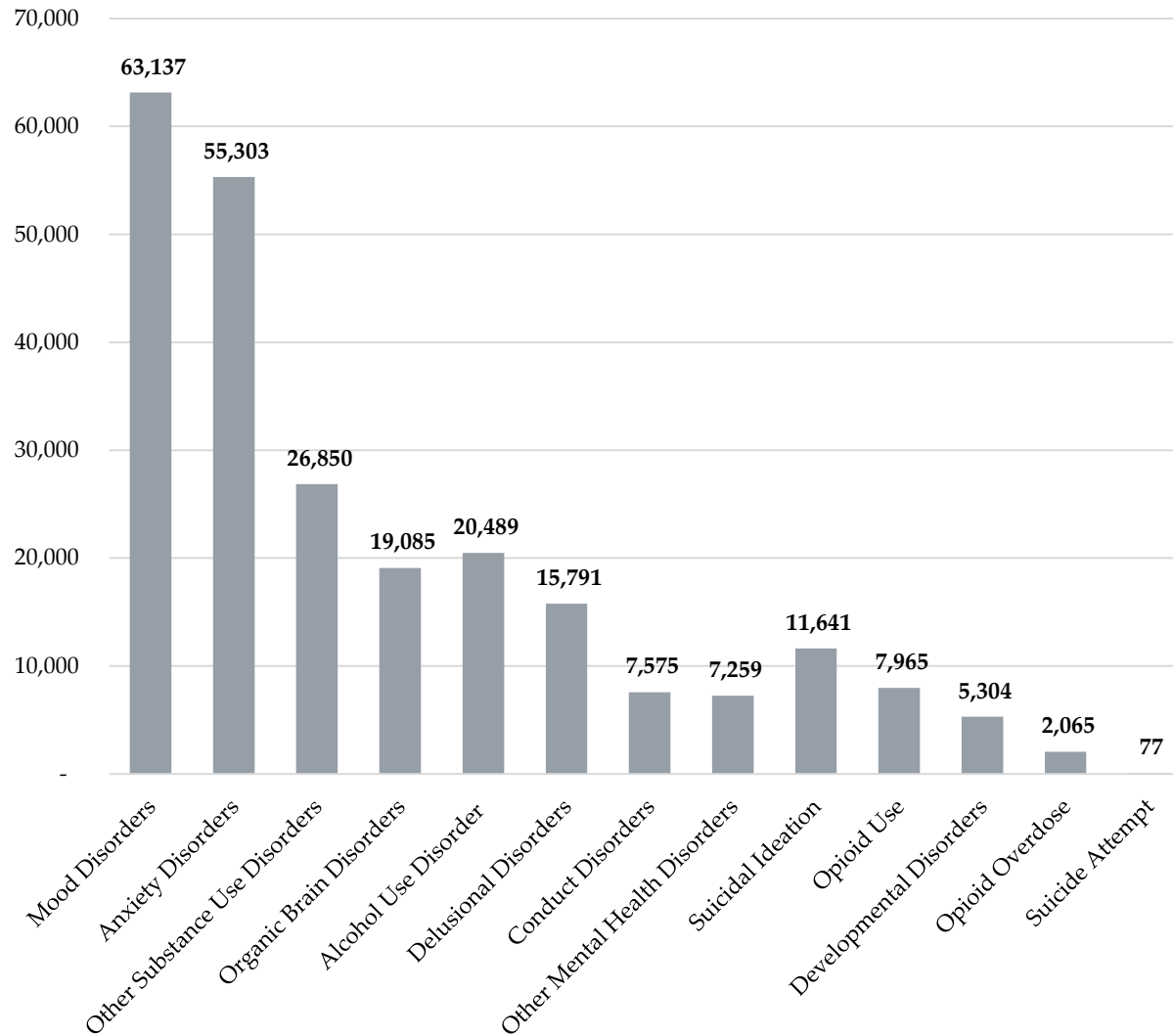
*Behavioral health encounters include mental health and substance abuse disorder emergency department encounters as a primary or secondary diagnosis.

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Changes in coding practices over time may impact trends seen in the prevalence of behavioral health encounters in emergency departments.

Emergency Care Encounters with Behavioral Health* as Primary or Secondary Diagnosis, 2017 - 2020



Primary and Secondary Behavioral Health Diagnoses for Emergency Department Encounters, 2020



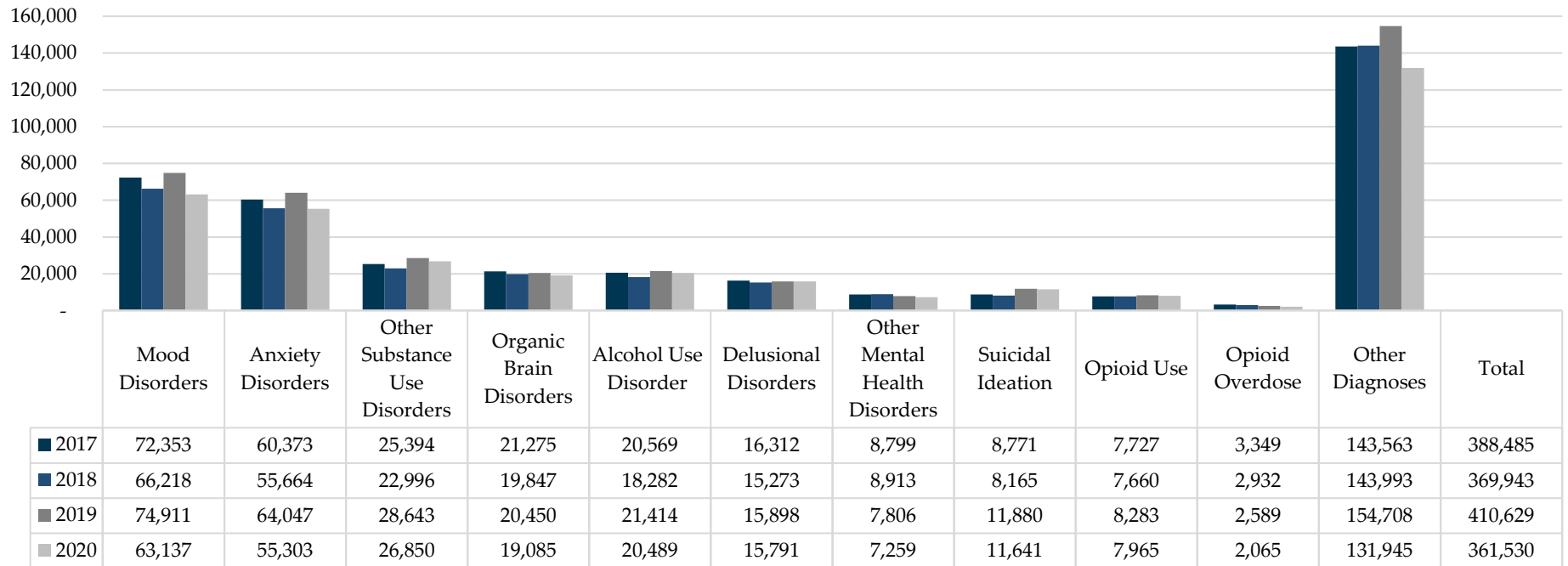
Emergency department encounters with primary and secondary behavioral health diagnoses account for more than 242,500 (44%) of total emergency department encounters in 2020.

Mood and Anxiety Disorders make up 49% of all primary and secondary emergency department behavioral health diagnoses in 2020.

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Distribution of behavioral health diagnosis codes within emergency departments are based on billing/coding data and may not be reflective of diagnoses prevalence in the region or experiences in the emergency departments.

The number of primary and secondary behavioral health diagnoses for emergency department encounters have decreased by 12% over the past year.

Primary Behavioral and Secondary Behavioral Health Diagnoses for Emergency Department Encounters, 2017 - 2020



Eight behavioral health diagnoses decreased by 5% or more over the past year: Opioid Overdose (21%), Mood Disorders (16%), Other Diagnoses (15%), Anxiety Disorders (14%), Other Substance Use Disorders (7%), Organic Brain Disorders (7%), Other Mental Health Disorders (7%), and Alcohol Disorders (5%).

Note: Encounters where tobacco use reflects the only behavioral health diagnoses are excluded. Duplication across emergency department encounters does exist to account for both the primary and secondary diagnoses on each encounter. Distribution of behavioral health diagnosis codes within emergency departments are based on billing/coding data and may not be reflective of diagnoses prevalence in the region or experiences in the emergency departments. The 'Other Diagnoses' category includes: conduct disorders, tobacco use disorders, developmental disorders, and suicide attempts.

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