

New York City Gun Violence Costs Tax Payers \$40 Million a Year in Hospital Costs Alone

by Gina Moreno

More than 70 percent of total treatment costs for gunshot wounds in New York are borne by taxpayers, principally through Medicaid. Between 2010 and 2020, total hospital costs resulting from gunshot injuries in New York City amounted to \$469 million in constant dollars (i.e., adjusted for inflation).

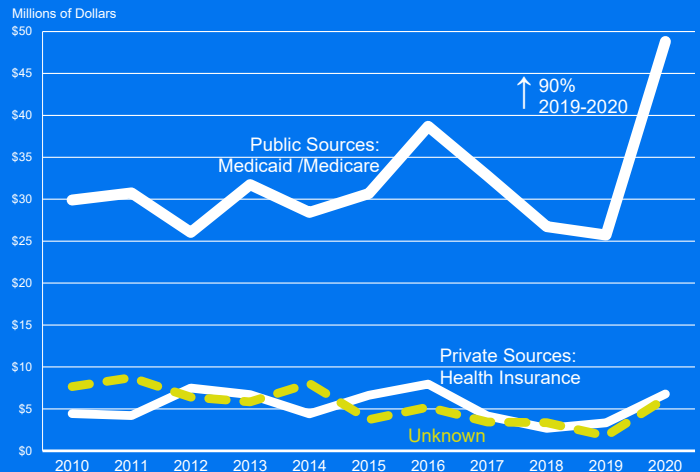
Researchers analyzed claims data from New York State's healthcare billing system known as SPARCS (Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System), a comprehensive reporting system established in 1979. Data from SPARCS include patient characteristics, diagnoses, treatments, and charges for each hospital inpatient stay and outpatient visit. SPARCS captures data from all facilities licensed under Article 28 of the Public Health Law (e.g., hospitals and nursing homes) and free-standing ambulatory surgery centers.

Researchers examined three payment sources: *public* (Medicaid, Medicare), *private* (Blue Cross/Blue Shield, private insurance), and *unknown* (no source listed, none reported, other/miscellaneous). The analysis summarizes inpatient, emergency, and ambulatory claim records from 2010 to 2020 for all gun injury patients with New York City residences admitted to one of 50 reporting facilities across the city's five boroughs (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island). The results describe costs for gun assaults alone. Accidental gun injuries and those due to suicide attempts are not included.

Inpatient hospital stays for injuries due to firearm assault average eight days, and hospital charges for inpatient stays account for 96 percent of total costs across all claim types (ambulatory, emergency, and inpatient). Public payment sources (Medicaid and Medicare) covered 75 percent of all charges and more than half (58%) of all medical claims from 2010 to 2020. Public payment sources ranged from 65 to 83 percent of total hospital payments across all years.

Medical cost figures after 2020 are not available yet, but increases in gun injury costs from 2019 to 2020 and the growth in [shootings](#) across the city were very similar (i.e., more than 90%). Recent [police data](#) indicate that shootings declined citywide in 2021 and 2022 but remain far higher than in 2019. Hospital costs for gun assault injuries among city residents likely remain between \$30 and \$40 million annually.

Two-Thirds of the Hospital Costs for Medical Treatment of Gun Injuries in New York City are Borne by Taxpayers



The Bronx and Brooklyn Accounted for 71% of Hospital Treatment Costs Paid by Public Sources Citywide

Payment Sources for Hospital Treatment Costs Due to Gun Injuries in Five New York City Boroughs: 2010-2020

	Bronx		Brooklyn		Manhattan	
Public	\$116M	78%	\$132M	74%	\$49M	77%
Private	\$17M	12%	\$22M	12%	\$6M	10%
Unknown	\$15M	10%	\$25M	14%	\$8M	13%
Total	\$148M	100%	\$178M	100%	\$64M	100%

	Queens		Staten Island		Citywide	
Public	\$42M	67%	\$11M	71%	\$350M	75%
Private	\$11M	17%	\$3M	17%	\$59M	13%
Unknown	\$10M	16%	\$2M	13%	\$60M	13%
Total	\$63M	100%	\$16M	100%	\$469M	100%

Note:

Detail figures in the table may not add exactly to the total due to rounding.

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