



2015 Annual Issues Symposium

Time From Injury to Treatment in Workers Compensation— Preliminary Results

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Overview

- Background
- Illustrative findings
 - Time from injury to first encounter with a medical professional
 - Specific examples
 - Time to first office visit
 - Time to see an orthopedist
- Summary

Background

- This is the first phase of a long-term study on the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on time from injury to treatment
- ACA's impact on Workers Compensation (WC) cases is uncertain
 - Increasing the insured population may drive up demand without a corresponding increase in the supply of doctors and other professionals
 - Resources may be governed by the needs of Medicaid, Medicare, and Group Health; each has different priorities than WC
 - Will this affect injured worker access to medical care?
- Phase one establishes pre-ACA benchmarks on the time from injury to treatment
- Findings here are based on Medical Data Call (MDC) treatments for injuries occurring between 7/1/2010 and 12/31/2012

Measuring Access to Care

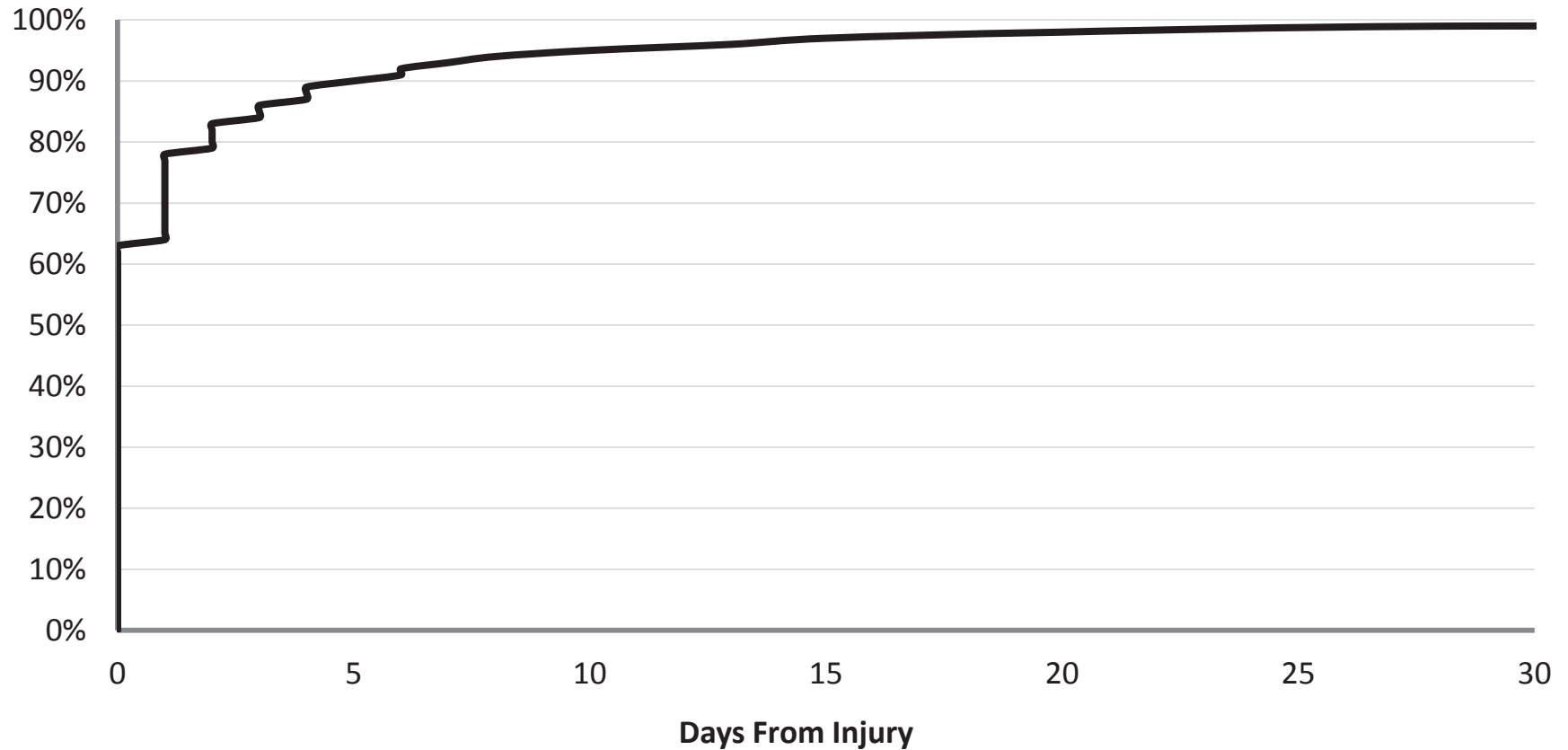
One measure of access is the days from injury to initial medical encounter—we call that measure the “time to treatment”

- Encounters are classified by provider and service type
 - Time to first office visit measures a different type of access than time to see an orthopedist
- Not all patients seek medical care right away
 - We have no measure for *when* care was initially sought
 - Claimants vary in how soon they seek care
- Here we exclude disease cases and look only at trauma cases
 - Disease cases include degenerative disk and other musculoskeletal conditions, as well as occupational diseases (e.g., silicosis)
 - Assigning a date of injury for some disease cases can be problematic
 - Occupational diseases (e.g., silicosis) can take many years to emerge

85% of Trauma Cases Are Treated Within Three Days From the Date of Injury

Time to First Treatment of Any Kind

Percent of Trauma Cases



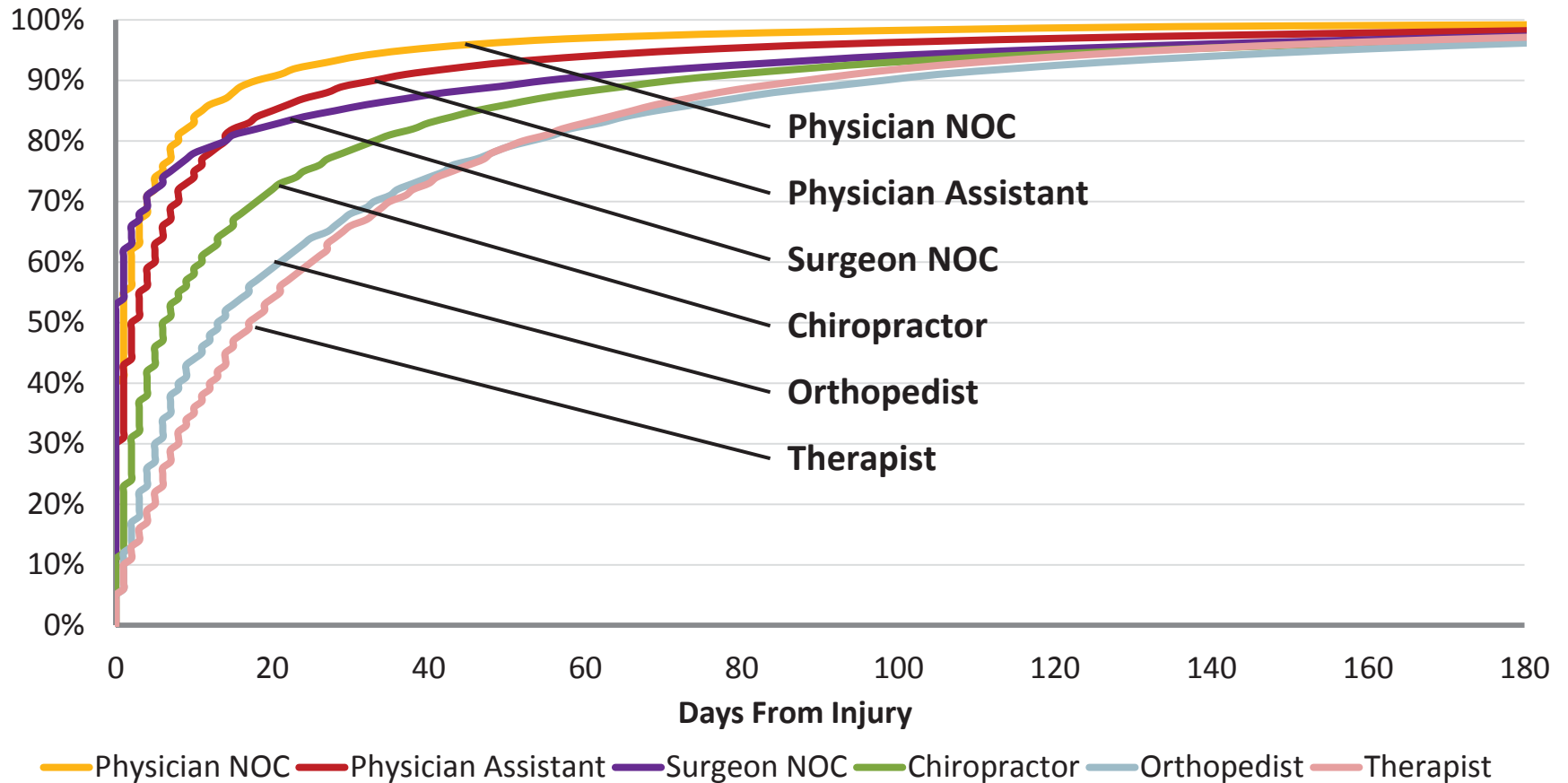
- 63% of trauma cases are treated on the date of injury

Source: NCCI Medical Data Call

Professional Providers Have Distinct Treatment Patterns

Time to First Treatment by Given Type of Provider

Percent of Trauma Cases

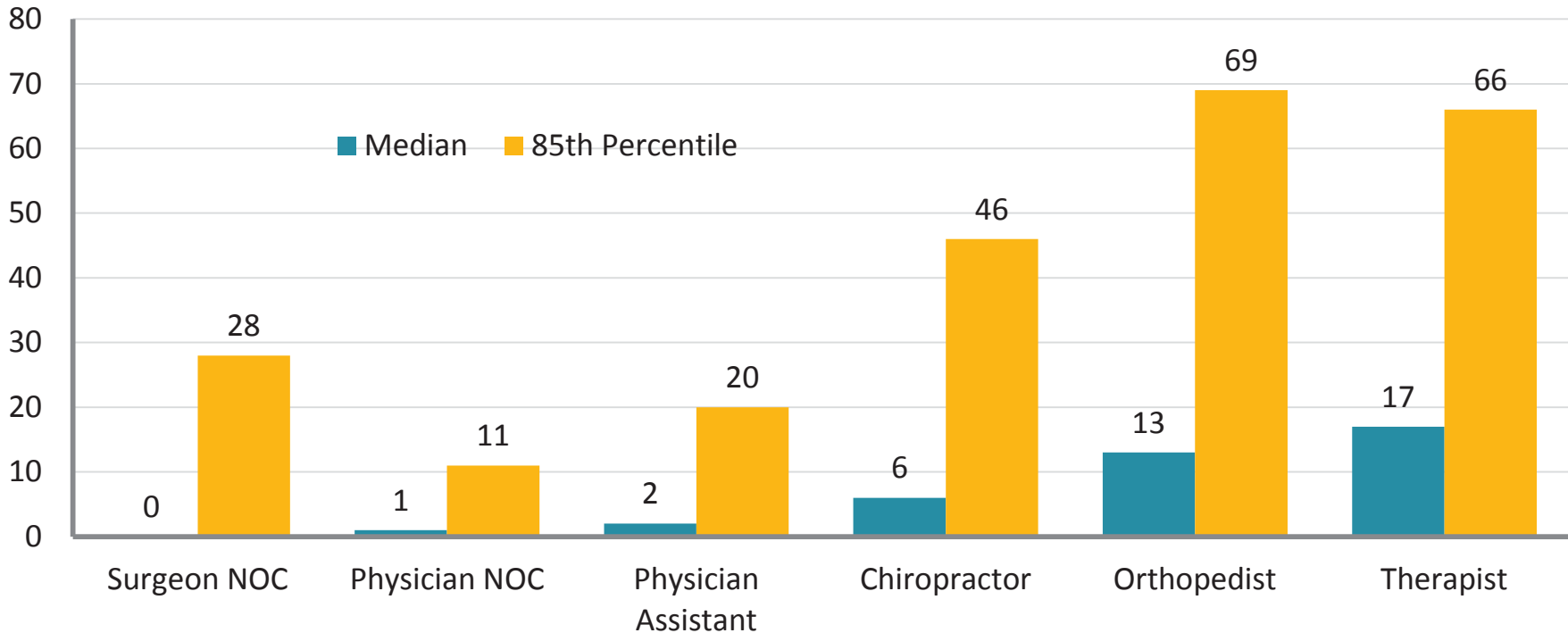


Source: NCCI Medical Data Call

Professional Providers Have Distinct Treatment Patterns

Median and 85th Percentile of Time to Treatment by Given Type of Provider for Trauma Cases

Days From Injury



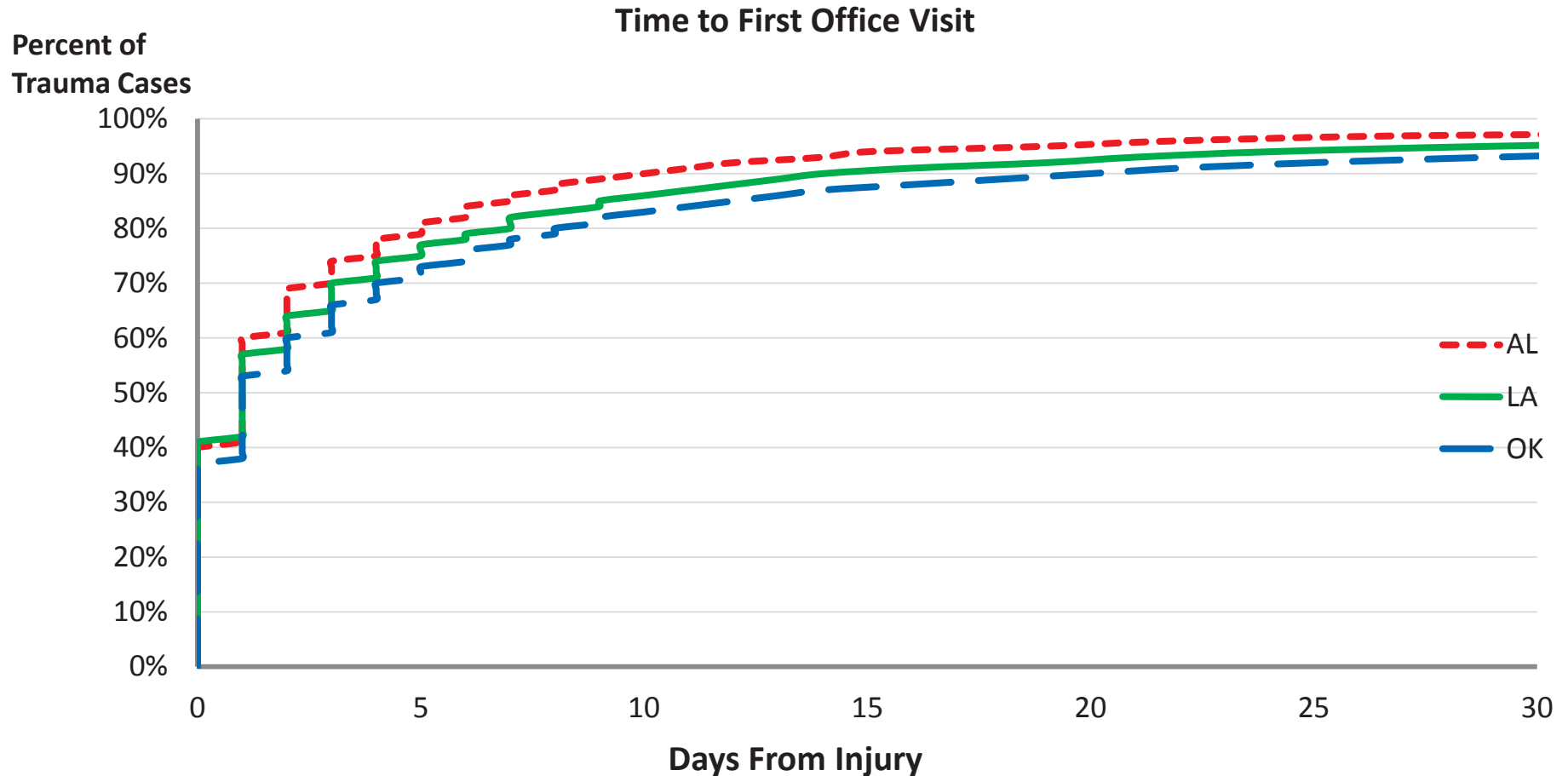
- Because such a high proportion of trauma-case patients are seen by a doctor or physician assistant soon after the injury, differences in time to treatment patterns become clear only at higher percentiles

Source: NCCI Medical Data Call

Some Specific Examples

- We look at the office visit service category as an example of access to primary care
- We look at the orthopedist provider category as an example of access to specialty care
- We look at three states—Alabama, Louisiana, and Oklahoma—to illustrate how states can differ in their timing for primary and specialty care
- We look at two cities—Birmingham, Alabama, and Chicago, Illinois—and ask whether there is a difference between urban and rural in timing for primary care

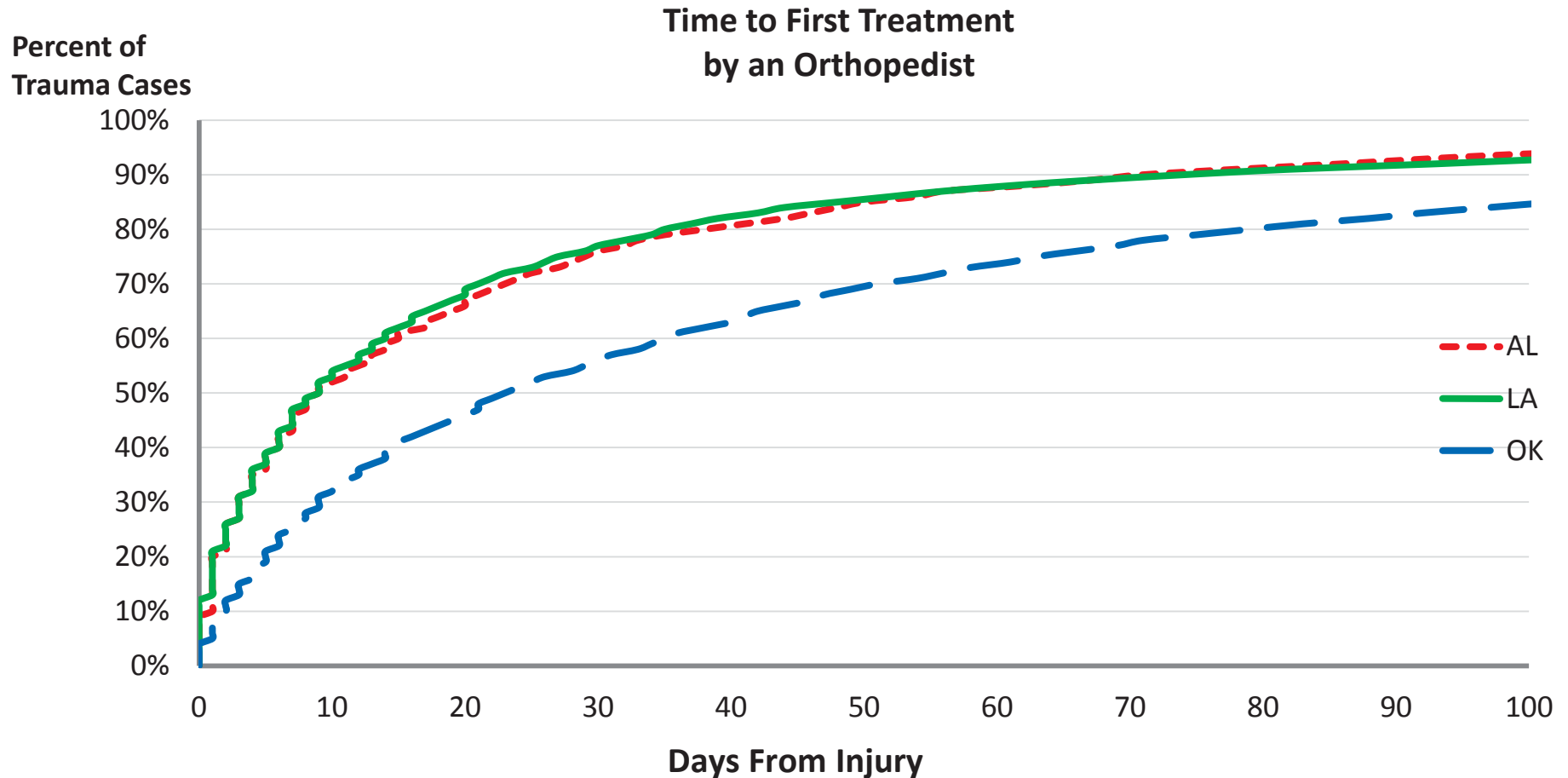
Time to First Office Visit Can Vary by State



- Some claimants wait longer to see a doctor in Louisiana or Oklahoma than in Alabama
- We cannot assess whether longer waiting times are due to claimants waiting longer to seek a doctor's appointment, the time it takes for them to be seen, or both

Source: NCCI Medical Data Call

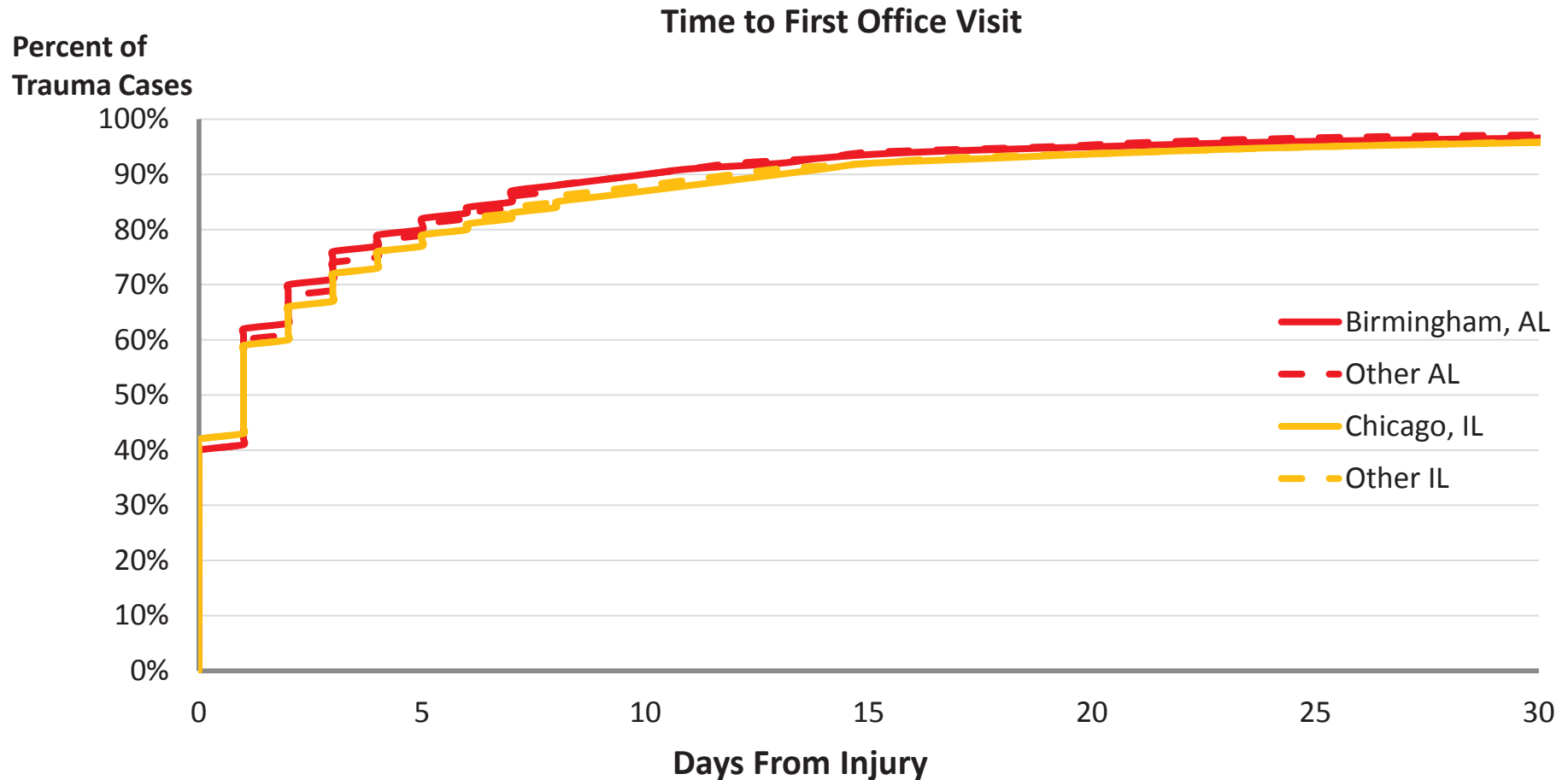
Time to See an Orthopedist Can Vary by State



- Patients wait longer to see an orthopedist in Oklahoma than in Alabama or Louisiana
- For example, half of the patients seen by an orthopedist within a year of the injury are actually seen within nine days in both Alabama and Louisiana, while that proportion drops to one-third in Oklahoma

Source: NCCI Medical Data Call

Time to First Office Visit: Urban Versus Rural



- Claimants take the same amount of time to see a doctor in Birmingham, Alabama, as in the rest of Alabama
- Similarly for Illinois, there is no difference in the time it takes for claimants to see a doctor in Chicago than elsewhere in the state

Source: NCCI Medical Data Call

Summary

- Significant differences by state
- This complicates the isolation of the impact of the ACA
- Areas of research to understand the baseline:
 - Treatment guidelines
 - Providers per capita
 - Population density
 - Claimant attorney involvement
 - WC fee schedules versus Medicare/Medicaid