
Diabetes' Health Toll Hits \$174 Billion Annually

Costs have climbed 32% since 2002, study finds

FRIDAY, Jan. 25 (HealthDay News) -- Diabetes-related medical and economic costs in the United States hit \$174 billion in 2007, a 32 percent increase from 2002, a new study shows.

The research, commissioned by the American Diabetes Association (ADA), found medical care costs for people with diabetes were about \$116 billion, and a disproportionate percentage of those costs resulted from the treatment and hospitalization of people with diabetes-related complications.

About one out of every five health-care dollars in the United States is spent caring for someone with diagnosed diabetes. Last year, diabetes caused more than 284,000 deaths in the United States.

"The findings reaffirm that diabetes is a public health crisis and its implications are painful and far-reaching," Ann L. Albright, president of health care and education at the ADA, said in a prepared statement. "This underscores the importance of early diagnosis and treatment. Diabetes becomes much more costly in financial and human terms when the disease is not properly treated."

The economic costs of diabetes in 2007 were estimated to be \$58 billion, a figure that includes reduced productivity of both people in the labor force and unpaid workers, unemployment from diabetes-related disability, and increased absenteeism.

It's believed that about 6 million people in the United States have undiagnosed diabetes, which means the actual total cost of diabetes in 2007 may have been much more than \$174 billion, the study said.

"Diabetes plagues more than just the individual with the disease. It is common, it is costly, it creates numerous complications, and there is no cure. Until we start reversing current trends, through increased awareness, prevention and aggressive disease management, diabetes will continue to have an adverse impact on our society as a whole," R. Stewart Perry, ADA's chairman of the board, said in a prepared statement.

The findings were discussed Wednesday at a Congressional briefing in Washington, D.C.

More information

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about diabetes.

-- Robert Preidt

SOURCE: American Diabetes Association, news release, Jan. 23, 2008



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