About Chronic Disease

The profile of diseases contributing most heavily to death, illness, and disability among Americans changed dramatically during the last century. The prolonged course of illness and disability from such chronic diseases as diabetes and arthritis result in extended pain and suffering and decreased quality of life for millions of Americans.

The United States cannot effectively address escalating health care costs without addressing the problem of chronic diseases:

- In 2005, 133 million people, almost half of all Americans lived with at least one chronic condition.

- Cardiovascular disease (primarily heart disease and stroke), cancer, and diabetes—are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health problems.

- Chronic, disabling conditions cause major limitations in activity for more than one of every 10 Americans.

- Chronic disease accounts for 70% of all deaths in the United States.

- The medical care costs of people with chronic diseases account for more than 75% of the nation's $2 trillion medical care costs.

- Chronic disease accounts for one-third of the years of potential life lost before age 65.

- Hospitalizations for pregnancy-related complications occurring before delivery account for more than $1 billion annually.

- The direct and indirect cost of diabetes is $245 billion a year.

- Each year, arthritis results in estimated medical care costs of more than $80 billion, and estimated total costs (medical care and lost productivity) of more than $125 billion.

- The estimated direct and indirect costs associated with smoking exceed $190 billion annually.

- In 2008, the cost of heart disease and stroke in the U.S. is projected to be almost $450 billion.

- The estimated total cost associated with obesity was nearly $117 billion in 2000.

- Cancer costs the nation an estimated $89 billion annually in direct medical costs.

- Nearly $98.6 billion is spent on dental services each year.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the American Diabetes Association