

# Health Bulletin



## Calculating The Cost Of Diabetes

(NAPSA)—Diabetes affects a large and growing number of Americans, and experts believe it will pose an increasingly difficult public health challenge in the years ahead.

Many believe increased spending on new medicines for diabetes is grounds for hope—hope for patients whose lives are threatened by the disease and for a health care system that will have to care for people with this and other chronic diseases.

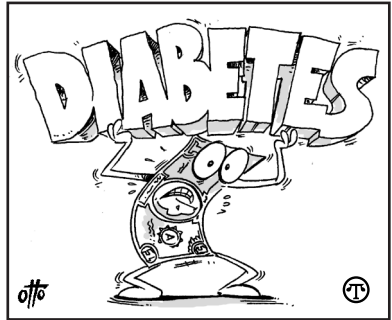
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “conservatively estimates that diabetes cases in the U.S. will increase 165 percent by 2050.”

Diabetes can exact an enormous toll. The risk of death among people with diabetes is two times greater than for people without diabetes. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to complications such as blindness, kidney disease, nerve disease and amputations, as well as heart disease and stroke.

The direct medical costs related to diabetes have more than doubled over the past 10 years, jumping from over \$45 billion in 1992 to nearly \$92 billion in 2002. The indirect economic burden of the disease through disability, work loss and premature death added another almost \$40 billion in 2002.

Progress against the disease, however, does not come cheap. Increased pharmaceutical spending is driven, in part, by the emergence of new medicines to treat the disease through new mechanisms of action. Some of these include:

- a compound that mimics the effects of a natural co-hormone



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that works with insulin to control blood glucose levels;

- a protein to promote increased insulin secretion when blood glucose levels are high, but not when they are normal;

- inhaled forms of insulin;
- a compound that may modify the metabolism of fat cells and help treat diabetes-related obesity; and

- dual-acting sensitizers that increase muscle cell uptake of blood sugar and inhibit the liver's production of blood sugars, as well as reduce blood lipid levels.

Large clinical studies have shown that “early and aggressive treatment of diabetes may delay or even prevent many of the complications associated with diabetes, leading to improved quality of life and reduced expenditures in patients with type 2 diabetes.”

Increased spending on new medicines for diabetes is viewed as a positive development in light of the results—improved patient outcomes and reduced overall costs.

*To learn more, visit the Web site at [www.phrma.org](http://www.phrma.org).*