



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Study Focuses On Lifetime Medical Costs For Women

(NAPSA)—How much does it cost to keep a woman healthy? According to a new study reported by The Society for Women's Health Research, on behalf of The Partnership for Long-Term Health for Women, the lifetime medical cost of treating some prevalent debilitating illnesses are staggering.

The study focused on those who have been treated for cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes, or stress urinary incontinence (SUI), and was the first-ever to quantify the lifetime medical costs of treating women with these illnesses.

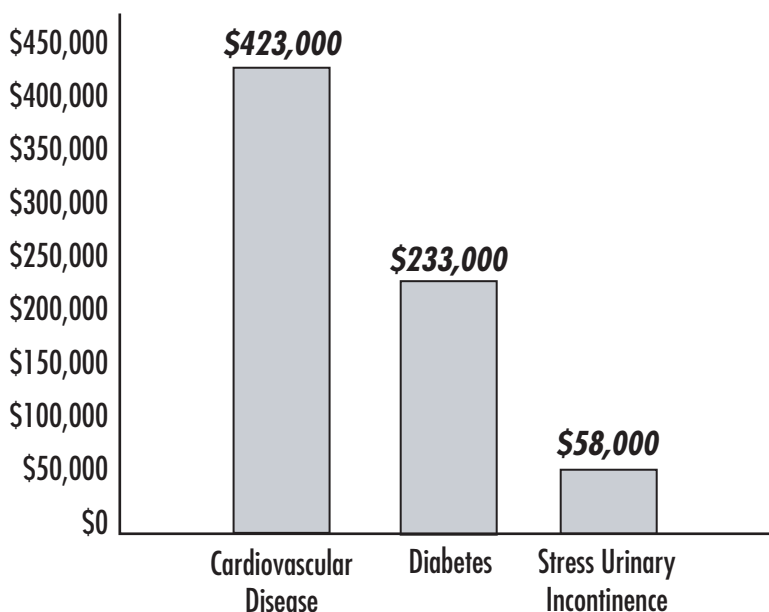
Lifetime medical costs for women are \$423,000 for CVD, \$233,000 for diabetes (Type 1 and Type 2), and \$58,000 for SUI.

"The findings show that the medical costs for treating these three conditions are staggering and we view these results as prompting a much needed call-to-action," said Phyllis Greenberger, MSW, president and CEO of the Society for Women's Health Research. "This study helps us raise awareness of the need for women to educate themselves about their potential health risks, understand the importance of disease prevention and the need for more research to advance treatments and therapies, as well as prepare themselves financially."

According to published government statistics, medical costs to treat a woman 65 years and older being treated for CVD, diabetes or SUI are \$30,700, \$25,000 and \$15,000, respectively.

"The study provides a snapshot of the high costs of women burdened with these conditions and demonstrates that medical costs can be financially debilitating," said Howard Birnbaum, director of the Healthcare Economics Practice at Analysis Group/Economics, which conducted the study. "The results provide a starting point for women and the nation. They provide a good baseline for women to take appropriate action regarding their health and financial security."

### Incremental Lifetime Medical Costs for Women<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Refers to average incremental lifetime costs per female treated for each condition where incremental refers to the differences between the total medical costs of patients versus those without the condition. Data adjusted to 2002 dollars.



The findings serve as an indicator for what women can spend over their lifetime if they are diagnosed with a particular disease. The study also conveys the need for policymakers to provide more resources for additional clinical research, sex-based healthcare information, and access to preventative care for women.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among women. About 950,000 Americans die of cardiovascular disease each year, equaling one death every 33 seconds. More than half of all cardiovascular disease deaths each year occur among women.

Diabetes is a chronic, debilitating and often deadly illness. It is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States alone. Diabetes is also a progressive illness that requires different treatments at different stages and has a high prevalence rate among women (8.2 percent), affecting approximately

8.2 million women in the U.S.

A May 2002 survey by the National Association for Continence found that stress urinary incontinence affects one in three American women in the U.S. SUI is the involuntary leakage of urine brought on by "stress" or pressure upon the bladder, as a result of laughing, coughing, sneezing, lifting, or exercise. SUI often goes undiagnosed because women frequently are too embarrassed to discuss it. Estimates show only one out of 12 women talk to their healthcare professional about SUI.

*The Partnership for Long-Term Health for Women was formed in 1999 by leaders from national and international organizations representing women, healthcare, aging and minority communities who joined together to identify ways to provide women with accurate health information and empower them to take preventive action.*