J. ECONOMIC COSTS OF OBESITY

HEALTH CARE COSTS

- Obesity costs the nation $75 billion in direct costs each year, while the total cost of obesity, including indirect costs, is as high as $139 billion per year.[154]
  - ▲ Indirect costs often fall most heavily on employers in the form of increased absenteeism, disability, presenteeism (when employees come to work in spite of illness, which can have similar negative repercussions on business performance), and workers' compensation.[155]
- Obesity-related annual costs for treating children more than tripled between 1979 and 1999.[156]
- Projections for health care costs attributable to obesity and overweight are that they will more than double every decade. By 2030, according to one study, health care costs attributable to obesity and overweight could range from $860 billion to $956 billion, which would account for 15.8 to 17.6 percent of total health care costs, or one in every six dollars spent on health care.[157]
- A 2008 study reported that obese employees cost private employers approximately $45 billion a year as a result of medical expenses and excessive absenteeism.[158]
- Obese people pay 36 percent more for health care and 77 percent more for medication when compared with normal-weight people. These increases are higher than the costs associated with smoking or drinking.[159]

Lower worker productivity and increased absenteeism

- Researchers found that obese workers had 183.63 lost workdays per 100 full-time employees, compared with normal-weight workers, who had 14.19 lost workdays per 100 full-time employees.[160]
- As a person's BMI increases, so do the number of sick days, medical claims and health care costs.[161]
- A 2004 study concluded that excessive weight and physical inactivity negatively impact the quality of work performed, the quantity of work performed and overall job performance among obese, sedentary individuals.[162]
- Higher health care costs for obese and sedentary workers signal poorer overall health among these individuals. And given poorer health, lower worker productivity and increased absenteeism are more likely among obese and physically inactive employees.

Higher workers' compensation claims

- Several studies have shown obese workers have higher workers' compensation claims.[163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168]
- The cost of workers' compensation claims by obese employees were also significantly higher. Obese employees had $51,091 in medical claims costs per 100 full-time employees, compared with only $7,503 in medical claims costs for normal weight workers. And obese workers had $59,178 in indemnity claims costs per 100 full-time employees, compared with only $5,396 in indemnity claims costs for normal weight employees.[169]

Occupational health and safety costs

- The number of severely obese (BMI ≥ 40) patients quadrupled between 1986 and 2000 from one in 200 to one in 50. The number of super-obese (BMI ≥ 50) patients grew by a factor of five, from one in 2,000 to one in 400.[170] Emergency responders and health care providers face unique challenges in transporting and treating the heaviest patients.
- A typical ambulance outfitted with equipment and two emergency medical technicians (EMTs) that can transport a 400-pound patient costs $70,000. A specially outfitted bariatric ambulance that can transport patients weighing up to 1,000 pounds costs $110,000.[171]
- A standard hospital bed can hold 500 pounds and costs $1,000. A bariatric hospital bed that can hold up to 1,000 pounds costs $4,000.[172]
- Nearly one in two emergency medical technicians sustained a back injury while performing EMS duties. Most blamed lifting extremely obese patients.[173]

source: F as in Fat: HOW OBESITY POLICIES ARE FAILING IN AMERICA; Trust for America's Health
http://healthyamericans.org/reports/obesity2009/Obesity2009Report.pdf