



## PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL HEALTH COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO SMOKING

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As more is learned about the pernicious effects of smoking on health, the estimates of the portion of total health costs caused by smoking have continued to increase. Published estimates range from six to fourteen percent.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, the higher smoking-attributable fractions in this range have been found to more accurately reflect current knowledge regarding the powerful impact of smoking on health, disease, treatment, and related costs.<sup>2</sup> Given the impact of smoking on health at different ages (and the earlier mortality of smokers, on average, than non-smokers), studies have also found that the smoking attributable percentage is even higher among health costs not covered by Medicare.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note that these estimates are quite conservative because they do not include the health costs caused by tobacco use other than smoking. In addition, some of the studies estimating the smoking-caused portion of total health costs do not account for any health harms or costs caused by secondhand smoke, or assume only a very small secondhand smoke impact, failing to reflect the growing body of research finding that the health harms and costs caused by exposure to secondhand smoke are much larger than previously thought.<sup>4</sup>

The latest estimates of total smoking-attributable health care costs approach \$100 billion.<sup>5</sup> Private insurance covers 50 percent of smoking-related medical costs for people aged 19-64.<sup>6</sup>

*Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, August 11, 2006/ Eric Lindblom*

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<sup>1</sup> Max, W., "The Financial Impact of Smoking on Health-Related Costs: A Review of the Literature," *American Journal of Health Promotion* 15:321-31, 2001. See, also, U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), "Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Economic Costs, United States, 1995-1999," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Review (MMWR)* 51(14): 300-03, April 12, 2002, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5114.pdf>. Miller, L., et al., "State Estimates of Total Medical Expenditures Attributable to Smoking, 1993" *Public Health Reports*, September/October 1998. Miller, V., et al., "Smoking Attributable Costs in the U.S.A.," *Social Science and Medicine* 48: 375-391, 1999. Miller, V., et al., *Smoking-Attributable Medical Care Costs: Models and Results*, Berkeley Economic Research Associates, September 3, 1997, <http://www.bera.com/reptframe.htm>. CDC, "Medical-Care Expenditures Attributable to Cigarette Smoking – United States, 1993," *MMWR* 43(26): 469-472, July 8, 1994, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm4326.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Warner, K., et al., "Medical Costs of Smoking in the United States: Estimates, Their Validity, and Their Implications," *Tobacco Control* 8(3): 290-300, <http://tc.bmjournals.com/content/vol8/issue3/index.shtml>, Autumn 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Zhang, X., et al., "Cost of Smoking to the Medicare Program, 1993," *Health Care Financing Review* 20(4): 179-196, Summer 1999, <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/review/99Summer/99Summerpg179.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*, 0-16-076152-2, June 2006, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke>.

<sup>5</sup> CDC, *Sustaining State Programs for Tobacco Control: Data Highlights*, 2006. CDC's state-specific estimates have been added to arrive at National estimate. CDC's *Data Highlights 2006* provides cost estimates that have been adjusted for inflation and put in 2004 dollars.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), "Medical-Care Expenditures Attributable to Cigarette Smoking – United States," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Review (MMWR)* 43(26): 469-72, July 8, 1994, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00031803.htm>.