

## Six Unhealthy Truths Tell the Story of Chronic Disease and Its Impact on Health and Health Care

The U.S. health care system was built to deliver services to acutely ill patients requiring episodic care, not to patients who are chronically, persistently in need of medical care. The clinical protocols for preventing and treating diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic conditions, and preventing costly secondary complications, are well established in the provider community. But our system does not deliver the required services, because physicians and hospitals are not paid to provide them (or paid poorly), and we have neither a care delivery model nor modern health information technology that facilitate doing so.

### 1. Chronic diseases are the number one cause of death and disability in the United States.

- More than 133 million Americans, 45% of the total population, have at least one chronic disease.
- Chronic diseases cause 7 of 10 deaths in the U.S.

### 2. Patients with chronic diseases account for 75% of the nation's health care spending.

- In public programs, chronic disease care constitutes an even higher portion of spending: 83 cents of every dollar in Medicaid and more than 95 cents in Medicare.
- More than three quarters of total Medicare spending is associated with patients with five or more chronic health care conditions.

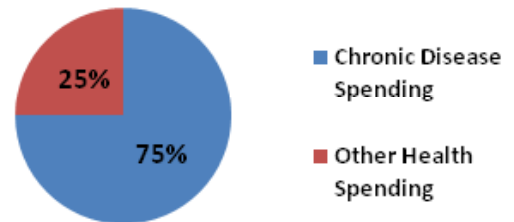
### 3. The vast majority of cases of chronic disease could be better prevented or managed.

- Chronically ill patients receive just 56% of the clinically recommended preventive and maintenance care they need.
- Less than 1% of our nation's health spending is invested in prevention. Instead, health spending is concentrated on curing disease and treating symptoms.

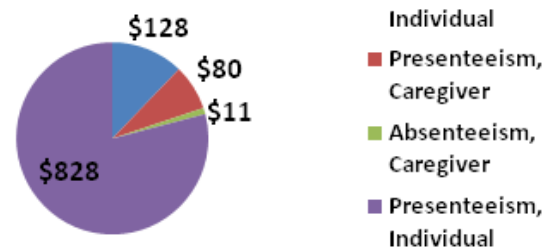
### 4. Direct health care costs represent only a quarter of the total cost of chronic diseases.

- Indirect costs such as absenteeism and presenteeism, or lost productivity that occurs when employees come to work but perform below par due to any kind of illness, cost America's businesses over \$1 trillion a year.

Chronic Disease Spending as a Percent of Total Health Care Spending



Lost Productivity by Source (in US\$ billions)



**\*\* TURN OVER FOR MORE INFORMATION \*\***





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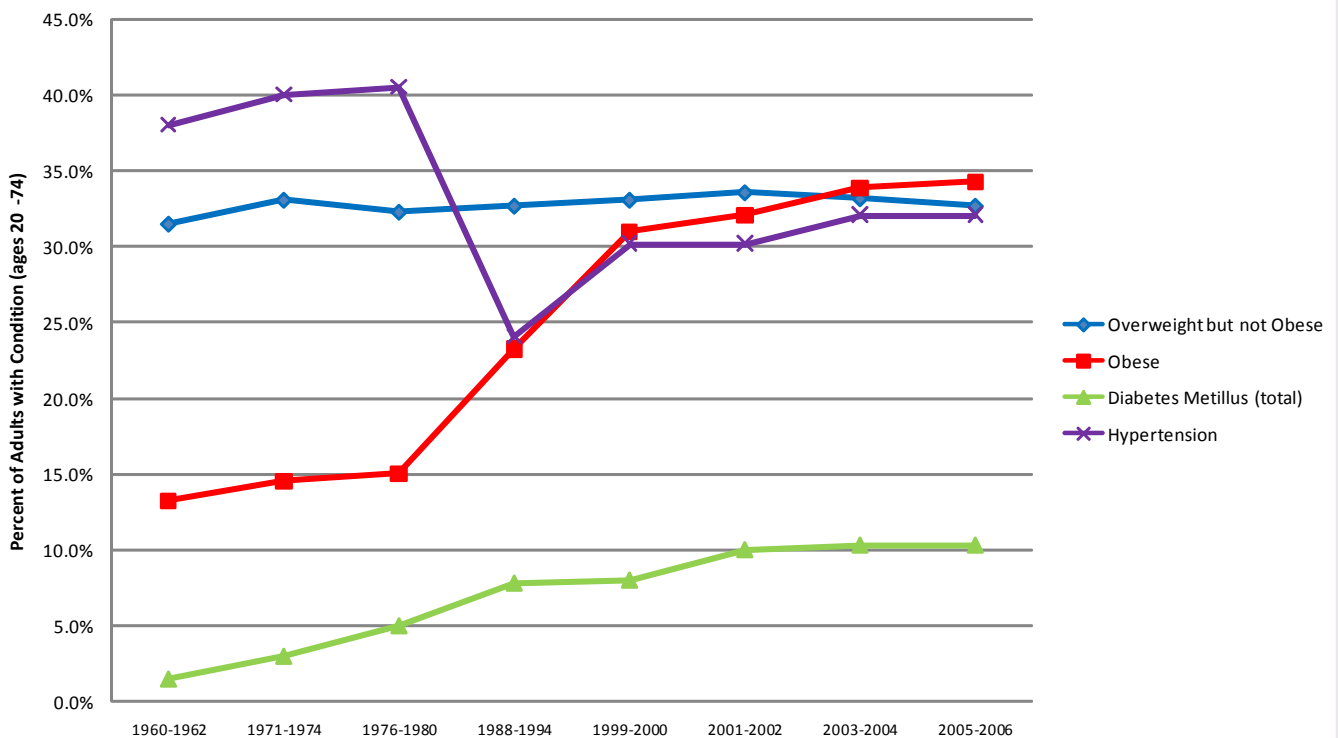
### 5. About two-thirds of the rise in health care spending is due to the rise in the prevalence of treated disease, primarily chronic disease.

- From 1987 to 2000, health spending for people not living in group living facilities (such as universities, military, and prisons) doubled from \$314 billion to \$628 billion per year.
- \$211 billion of that increase was due to the increase in treated disease.

### 6. The doubling of obesity between 1987 and today accounts for 15% to nearly 25% of the rise in health care spending.

- The percent of overweight children and youth has tripled since 1980.
- If the prevalence of obesity was the same today as in 1987, health care spending in America would be 10% lower per person—about \$220 billion less.

**Four Decades of Rising Rates of Overweight, Obesity, and Chronic Disease**



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.