

# AN UNHEALTHY AMERICA

More than half of all Americans suffer from one or more chronic diseases. Despite dramatic improvements in therapies and treatment, the rates of disease have risen dramatically -- and that rising rate is a crucial but frequently ignored contributor to rising medical expenditures, according to a report by the Milken Institute. Among the findings, more than 109 million Americans report having at least one of the seven most common chronic diseases (cancer, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, pulmonary conditions and mental disorders), for a total of 162 million cases. The total impact of these diseases on the economy is \$1.3 trillion annually. Of this amount, lost productivity totals \$1.1 trillion per year, while another \$277 billion is spent annually on treatment. On our current path, in 2023 we project a 42 percent increase in cases of the seven chronic diseases, or \$4.2 trillion in treatment costs and lost economic output.

But there is room for optimism, say the authors. Assuming modest improvements in preventing and treating disease, we could avoid 40 million cases of chronic disease by 2023. We could reduce the economic impact of disease by 27 percent, or \$1.1 trillion annually; increase the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) by \$905 billion linked to productivity gains and decrease treatment costs by \$218 billion per year. Lower obesity rates alone could produce productivity gains of \$254 billion and avoid \$60 billion in treatment expenditures per year.

*Source: Ross DeVol and Armen Bedroussian, "An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease -- Charting a New Course to Save Lives and Increase Productivity and Economic Growth," Milken Institute, October 2007.*

For text:

<http://www.milkeninstitute.org/publications/publications.taf?function=detail&ID=38801018&cat=Re sRep>