

Key Points from BeActive NC 2012 Report: *Tipping the Scales*

DATA SOURCE

Tipping the Scales: The High Cost of Unhealthy Behavior in North Carolina
BeActive North Carolina 2012 Report
<http://www.beactivenc.org/tippingthescales/>, accessed 5/8/12

The analysis in this report was based on data released in 2009 and 2010.

CHRONIC DISEASE

In North Carolina in 2010, the price tag for medical treatment, workers' compensation claims, and lost productivity associated with the following eight risk factors was \$53.8 billion:

1. Excess weight
2. Type II diabetes
3. Low fruit and vegetable consumption
4. High cholesterol
5. Hypertension (high blood pressure)
6. Depression
7. Physical inactivity
8. Tobacco use (smoking)

Taken together, these risk factors were responsible for \$16.4 billion in medical costs in 2010, up from \$14.75 billion in 2006.

If current trends don't reverse, these eight risk factors will cost North Carolina \$67.39 billion in 2015.

While medical costs attributed to the eight risk factors listed above increased from 2006 to 2010, costs due to lost productivity dropped. However, this decrease was the result of economic factors (e.g., higher unemployment, shift toward contract and part-time workers) and a change in methodology for calculating risk factors related to lost productivity.

Lost productivity costs borne by employers in 2010 totaled \$37.3 billion, more than twice as much as the cost of medical care for the eight risk factors listed above.

The prevalence of six of the eight risk factors increased between 2006 and 2010: excess weight, type II diabetes, low fruit and vegetable consumption, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and depression. However, the prevalence of physical inactivity and smoking decreased.

In North Carolina in 2010, an estimated fourteen billion dollars (\$14,044,872,040) in health care costs (i.e., medical costs plus lost-productivity costs) were attributable to three preventable risk factors: tobacco use, physical inactivity, and low fruit and vegetable intake.

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CHRONIC DISEASE (continued)

Sedentary adults who become active reduce excess cholesterol by an impressive 36 percent on average. Sedentary adults who become active reduce depressive episodes by a significant 33 percent on average.

It is estimated that if 68,130 sedentary adults become active, it would generate nearly \$55 million in medical care and lost-productivity savings within the first year.

The following table shows data from page 16 of the *Tipping the Scales* report.

Risk Factor	Annual Cost in NC in 2010 (medical cost plus lost productivity cost)
Low fruit and vegetable intake	\$1,533,721,498
Physical inactivity	\$8,386,140,781
Tobacco use (smoking)	\$4,125,009,761
Hypertension	\$5,822,895,628
High lipids	\$7,210,640,201
Excess weight	\$17,601,582,201
Diabetes	\$4,496,655,419
Depression	\$4,667,447,556
Total cost of eight risk factors listed above	\$53,844,093,045
Combined cost of tobacco use, physical inactivity and low fruit and vegetable intake	\$14,044,872,040

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, NUTRITION, AND OBESITY

Excess weight is the most expensive risk factor (of the eight risk factors listed at the top of the first page), responsible for more than \$17.6 billion in total medical bills and lost worker productivity in North Carolina in 2010.

Physical inactivity is the second most expensive risk factor, with a price tag of \$8.3 billion in total medical bills and lost worker productivity in North Carolina in 2010.

Excess weight prevented an additional \$11.8 billion (or nearly 3 percent of North Carolina's gross state product) of goods and services from being produced in 2010, and physical inactivity prevented an additional \$4.7 billion in potential productivity gain.

Medical Costs in North Carolina in 2010

- Excess weight: \$5.77 billion
- Physical inactivity: \$3.67 billion
- Low fruit and vegetable intake: \$1.53 billion

In North Carolina in 2010, an estimated twenty-seven billion dollars (\$27,521,444,480) in health care costs (i.e., medical costs plus lost-productivity costs) were attributable to **physical inactivity, low fruit and vegetable intake** and **excess weight** combined (see table on previous page for health care costs attributable to each of the three risk factors independently).