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## Big Jump in Diabetes Incidence Expected in Next Decade

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Reviewed by  
November 24, 2010

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### Review

By the year 2020, 52% of adults in the U.S. could be prediabetic or diabetic, up from about 40% today, a report released Tuesday predicted.

"As a result, we project that over the next decade the nation may spend almost \$3.4 trillion on diabetes-related care," according to the report, which was produced by insurance giant UnitedHealth Group's Center for Health Reform & Modernization.

From 2011 to 2020, private insurers are expected to spend \$1.03 trillion on diabetes-related care, Medicare is expected to spend \$2.04 trillion, and Medicaid \$111 billion. Another \$166 billion worth of care will be given to diabetes patients who are uninsured, the report noted.

The report recommended strategies for curbing these costs, particularly lifestyle interventions and programs to increase medication adherence. Instituting such programs could save as much as \$250 billion over 10 years, including \$144 billion in savings for the federal government, authors of the report estimated.

"Our new research shows there is a diabetes time bomb ticking in America, but fortunately there are practical steps that can be taken now to defuse it," Simon Stevens, executive vice president of UnitedHealth Group, and chairman of the Center for Health Reform & Modernization, said in a statement.

"What is now needed is concerted, national, multi-stakeholder action. Making a major impact on the prediabetes and diabetes epidemic will require health plans to engage consumers in new ways, while working to scale nationally some of the most promising preventive care models."

Weight loss among individuals prone to prediabetes is one area targeted in the report. "Our simulation suggests that a five percent weight loss (the target recommended by the American Heart Association) could reduce prediabetes gradually, leading to a 10% reduction by 2020," the authors wrote.

Some reduction in conversion to diabetes also would occur, they suggested.

"If that happened, almost 10 million people would not develop prediabetes or diabetes over the next 10 years, resulting in \$45 billion [in] lower projected health system costs in the coming decade -- and a far larger saving over their lifetimes."

In addition, the report said that if all of the recommendations were enacted,

increases in workplace productivity and increased wages resulting from the health improvements would be worth an estimated \$239 billion over 10 years.

In a study released earlier this month, the CDC projected that up to a third of U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050, assuming that current trends continue.

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