

AIDS economic impact has hefty tab

September 22 2006

The estimated economic cost of HIV and AIDS in the United States is about \$36.4 billion annually, federal government researchers say.

That figure is far more than believed earlier, the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a report.

More than 80 percent of that tab, based on those people infected in 2002, is related to productivity losses, a cost that most previous studies have omitted, the CDC said.

Minorities incur fewer direct medical costs than whites but suffer greater financial damage from lost productivity, the report said.

An estimated 40,000 people in the United States are infected with HIV each year.

Based on the work of researchers from CDC and Emory and Georgia State universities, the report was published on-line in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, ahead of print publication.

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Citation: AIDS economic impact has hefty tab (2006, September 22) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-09-aids-economic-impact-hefty-tab.html>

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