

# Out-of-pocket medical expenditure up for cancer survivors

June 7 2019

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(HealthDay)—Cancer survivors have significantly higher annual out-of-

pocket medical expenditures than individuals without a cancer history, according to research published in the June 7 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Donatus U. Ekwueme, Ph.D., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues analyzed data from the 2011 to 2016 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey to estimate annual out-of-pocket expenditures and [financial hardship](#) among cancer survivors aged 18 to 64 years compared with individuals without a cancer history.

The researchers found that compared with those without a cancer history, cancer survivors had significantly higher average annual out-of-pocket spending per person (\$1,000 versus \$622). Financial hardship was common, with 25.3 and 34.3 percent of [cancer survivors](#) reporting material hardship (problems paying [medical bills](#)) and psychological hardship (worry about medical bills), respectively. Strategies aimed at alleviating the disproportionate financial hardships experienced by many survivors include systematic screening for financial hardship at diagnosis and throughout cancer care, integration of discussions about the potential for adverse financial consequences of treatment in shared decision making, and linkage of patients and survivors to available resources.

"The findings in this report might lead to increased awareness in all sectors of the public health and medical community that the rising cost of [cancer care](#) is a major barrier to survivors' well-being," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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Citation: Out-of-pocket medical expenditure up for cancer survivors (2019, June 7) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-06-out-of-pocket-medical-expenditure-cancer-survivors.html>

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