Health expenditures considerable for asthma, COPD in U.S. workers

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(HealthDay)—The annualized total medical expenditures for asthma and

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are $7 billion and $5 billion among U.S. workers, respectively, according to research published in the July 3 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Girija Syamlal, M.B.B.S., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues examined 2011 to 2015 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey data to determine the medical expenditures attributed to asthma and COPD treatment among U.S. workers aged ≥18 years.

Among the estimated 166 million U.S. workers, 8 and 7 million had at least one asthma-related and at least one COPD-related medical event, respectively, during 2011 to 2015. The researchers found that the annualized total medical expenditures were $7 billion and $5 billion for asthma and COPD, respectively, in 2017. Private health insurance paid for 61 and 59 percent of expenditures attributable to treatment of asthma and COPD, respectively. Inpatient visits had the highest annualized per-person asthma- and COPD-related expenditures ($8,238 and $27,597, respectively). By industry group, workers in public administration had the highest annualized per-person expenditures ($1,279 for asthma and $1,819 for COPD).

"Prioritizing intervention efforts aimed at preventing asthma and COPD among workers, especially among those with higher medical costs, by supporting workplace programs and policies (e.g., smoke-free workplace policies, smoking cessation programs, and workplace exposure control measures) can reduce the impact of disease and improve worker health," the authors write.

More information: Abstract/Full Text

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