Press Release

Chronic Disease: A Worsening Health and Economic Crisis

ANDREW EVANS | SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

Chronic diseases are a contributing factor to the impact of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, but what are the trends for chronic disease looking forward, and how much of a cost will these conditions impose on society? In a new primer, AAF's Director of Human Welfare Policy Tara O'Neill Hayes and Serena Gillian survey the trends and costs around chronic disease. They find that these conditions are becoming more common and will impose an increasingly high burden on society in the coming years.

Their central points:

- The prevalence and cost of chronic disease in the United States is growing and will continue to grow, not just as a result of the Baby Boomer generation aging but also due to increased disease prevalence among children and younger adults;
- Those with chronic disease and their families face both direct and indirect costs: Direct costs primarily stem from longer and more frequent hospital visits and greater prescription drug use, while indirect costs arise from lost education and job opportunities; and
- When including indirect costs associated with lost economic productivity, the total cost of chronic disease in the United States reaches $3.7 trillion each year, approximately 19.6 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Read the Primer