The State of US Health
FINDINGS FROM THE GLOBAL BURDEN OF DISEASE STUDY

The Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) measures the world’s health problems, including in all 50 of the United States and Washington, D.C., from 1990 through 2016. It is the most comprehensive and comparable study on US health to date, tracking 400+ diseases, injuries, and risk factors. It complements the research done by state health departments and the CDC, and is used by the US National Institutes of Health to decide where to invest research funding. The study is coordinated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Health is more than life or death
GBD measures years lost due to death and disability – diseases or injuries that hurt us, but do not necessarily kill us.

Addressing disability has proven difficult
While treatments for many leading causes of death have improved since 1990, we have been less successful at treating disability, which poses an ever-increasing threat to our nation’s health.

Leading causes of early death and disability in the US, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ischemic heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lung cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>COPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Low back pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Alzheimer’s disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Opioid use disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other musculoskeletal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Major depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Migraine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All-ages rate

Ischemic heart disease, years of life lost (YLLs)

Low back pain, years lived with disability (YLDs)

*Age-adjusted
Risk factors affecting health in the US

Much of the poor health experienced by Americans is driven by risk factors, such as poor diet, high blood pressure, or smoking.

Six risk factors each accounted for more than 5% of early deaths and disabilities in the US in 2016:

1. Tobacco use 12%
2. Obesity and overweight 12%
3. Poor diet 11%
4. Alcohol and drug use 10%
5. High blood sugar 9%
6. High blood pressure 8%

Addressing disability is expensive

Eight of the top 10 most expensive health conditions in the US cause more disability than deaths.

The most expensive health condition in the US is diabetes – mostly due to the high cost of medications used to treat it.

Diabetes spending rose 6% annually from $37 billion in 1996 to $101 billion in 2013. Nearly 70% of the increase was due to pharmaceutical spending.

How can we improve health in the US?

We should prevent health problems by reducing risks and helping all Americans experience improved health.

**REDUCE RISKS**

Adopt national and local plans to incentivize health systems, providers, individuals, and communities to reduce leading risk factors, including tobacco use, obesity, and poor diet.

**HELP THOSE FALLING BEHIND**

Expand access to quality care and address the social determinants of health by supporting national, state, and community programs to improve health – especially in the 21 states where adults are now worse off than they were in 1990.

About IHME

IHME is an independent health research center at the University of Washington in Seattle. It is a leading health metrics organization in the world. Its work includes studies of US health spending, health in all 3,142 US counties, future health scenarios, and a pilot effort to map health at the census tract level. IHME plans to expand its US research in the future. Results from IHME research are made freely available to the public.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Katie Leach-Kemon
Policy Translation Manager
katielk@uw.edu
+1-206-897-2839