The High Price of the Opioid Crisis, 2021
Increasing access to treatment can reduce costs

Untreated opioid use disorder (OUD), a chronic brain disease, has a serious cost to people, their families, and society because of increased health care spending, criminal justice issues, and lost productivity.

Each year, opioid overdose, misuse, and dependence account for:

- **$35 billion in health care costs**¹
  Patients who experienced an opioid overdose accounted for $1.94 billion in annual hospital costs.²

- **$14.8 billion in criminal justice costs**³
  Each dollar invested in addiction treatment reduces drug-related crime, theft, and criminal justice costs by $4-$7.⁴

- **$92 billion in lost productivity**⁵
  The losses stem from premature death due to overdose, “productive hours” lost to OUD, and opioid-related incarceration.

Nearly 70,000 Americans died of an opioid overdose in 2020.⁶
Improving access to evidence-based treatments for OUD has been associated with savings of $25,000 to $105,000 in lifetime costs per person.⁷
Endnotes


For further information, please visit:
pewtrusts.org/substancemisuse

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