The Health Care and Economic Benefits of Walking and Biking Trails

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In 2016, national health expenditures totaled $3.35 trillion.

Average of $10,345 for every man, woman, and child.

Costs are projected to increase by 5.8% from 2015 to 2025.

About 5 percent of the population — those most frail or ill — accounts for nearly half the spending in a given year.

By 2025, government health care programs will account for 47% of health care spending.

Source: *Journal of Health Affairs*
Health Care Costs (2013)

$101.4 billion: Diabetes
$88.1 billion: Ischemic heart disease
$86.7 billion: Low back and neck pain
$83.9 billion: High blood pressure
$71.1 billion: Depression

32%: Hospital care
20%: Physicians and other clinicians
10%: Prescription drugs from pharmacies

Sources: Journal of Health Affairs and Journal of the American Medical Association
Health and Physical Activity

- Less than half of all U.S. adults, and 30% of high school students get the recommended daily amount of physical activity
- Regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do for their health
  - Help individuals control weight
  - Reduces risk of cardiovascular disease
  - Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
  - Reduces risk of some cancers
  - Strengthen bones and muscles
  - Improves mental health and mood
Physical Activity and Health Care Costs

- Lack of physical activity is associated with higher health care costs and utilization.
- Those who work out at least three times per week are:
  - More productive at work
  - Miss fewer workdays
- Translating to:
  - Lost income
  - Lost opportunities for advancement
  - Higher health care expenditures

Source: Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
Physical Activity and Health Care Costs

- Employees with metabolic syndrome who exercised enough cost $2,770 in total health care annually, compared to $3,855 for workers with metabolic syndrome who didn't exercise enough
- Pharmacy costs alone were twice as much
- 11.1% of aggregate health care expenditures were associated with inadequate physical activity

Source: Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and Elsevier
Physical Activity and Income

- Men who work out regularly can expect to make 6% more than their sedentary counterparts, on average
- Women who work out regularly make 10% more, on average

Source: *Journal of Labor Research*
Physical Activity and Health Status

- For example:
  - Physical activity can decrease blood glucose control and prevent or delay type 2 diabetes
  - Combining physical activity and modest weight can lower type 2 diabetes risk by up to 58% in high-risk populations
  - 40% reduction in heart attack and stroke between the highest and lowest exercise groups for women engaging in physical activity

Sources: National Diabetes Association and Women’s Health Study
Benefits for Residents

- Physical activity increased among individuals in communities with new or improved projects or policies combining pedestrian or cycling paths with land use and design components
- Combinations of activity-supportive built environments were associated with:
  - Higher levels of transportation-related physical activity
  - Recreational physical activity
  - Total walking

Source: Community Preventive Services Task Force
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