The Burden of Diabetes in Alabama

Diabetes is an epidemic in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 34 million Americans have diabetes and face its devastating consequences. What’s true nationwide is also true in Alabama.

Alabama’s diabetes epidemic:

- Approximately 550,149 people in Alabama, or 14.1% of the adult population, have diagnosed diabetes.
- An additional 119,000 people in Alabama have diabetes but don’t know it, greatly increasing their health risk.
- There are 1,316,000 people in Alabama, 34.6% of the adult population, who have prediabetes with blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.
- Every year an estimated 34,668 adults in Alabama are diagnosed with diabetes.

Diabetes is expensive:

People with diabetes have medical expenses approximately 2.3 times higher than those who do not have diabetes.

- Total direct medical expenses for diagnosed diabetes in Alabama were estimated at $4.2 billion in 2017.
- In addition, another $1.7 billion was spent on indirect costs from lost productivity due to diabetes.

Improving lives, preventing diabetes and finding a cure:

In 2021, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at the National Institutes of Health invested $30,250,822 in diabetes-related research projects in Alabama. The Division of Diabetes Translation at the CDC provided $2,118,404 in diabetes prevention and educational grants in Alabama in 2018.

Sources include:

- Diabetes Incidence: 2018 diabetes incidence rate, cdc.gov/diabetes/data
- Research expenditures: 2021 NIDDK funding, report.nih.gov/award/index.cfm; 2020 CDC diabetes funding, fundingprofiles.cdc.gov/FundingProfiles/FundingQuery

Diagnosed diabetes costs an estimated $5.9 billion in Alabama each year.

The serious complications include heart disease, stroke, amputation, end-stage kidney disease, blindness—and death.