

## **Article Summary: Medical Costs of Cancer Have Nearly Doubled Since 1987**

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Little information is available on how cancer costs have changed over time and who pays most cancer-related expenses. Florence Tangka, Ph.D., a health economist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), led a team of scientists from CDC, Emory University, and RTI International in analyzing data from the 2001 through 2005 [Medical Expenditure Panel Survey](#) and its predecessor, the [National Medical Expenditure Survey](#), a one-time survey conducted in 1987.

The investigators found that in 1987 the total medical cost of cancer (in 2007 dollars) was \$24.7 billion, paid by—

- Private insurance (42%)
- Medicare (33%)
- Out-of-pocket payments (17%)
- Other public sources (7%)
- Medicaid (1%)

Between 1987 and the 2001–2005 period, the total medical cost of cancer increased to \$48.1 billion because more people are getting cancer and living longer. In 2001–2005, the costs of treatment for cancer were paid by—

- Private insurance (50%)
- Medicare (34%)
- Out-of-pocket payments (8%)
- Other public sources (5%)
- Medicaid (3%)

The share of cancer costs from hospitalized patients fell from 64% in 1987 to 28% in 2001–2005, while costs of cancer care outside of hospitals increased.

### **Citation**

Tangka FK, Trogon JG, Richardson LC, Howard D, Sabatino SA, Finkelstein EA. [Cancer treatment cost in the United States: has the burden shifted over time?](#) *Cancer* 2010;116(14):3477–3484.