

Cost of Dental Disease

I often hear that accountants, brokers, consultants, policy makers, etc don't pay much attention to dental expenses because they are relatively inexpensive. Compared to the \$1.5 trillion spent on personal health care in 2004, the dental expenditure of \$81,476,000,000 (or \$81,476 million) represents only 5.3% of the costs. However, that analogy is an apples to oranges one because you're comparing one category of disease to the sum of all the others. If you compare costs for treating dental diseases to the cost of the individual other categories of disease/conditions tracked by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid only the category of "heart conditions" is more expensive to the economy than dental diseases.

Below are the health care costs associated with the 60 diseases/conditions tracked by CMS. For probably most purchasers of health care, dental disease is the second most costly disease/condition they cover.

Table 3: Total Expenses for Conditions by Site of Service: United States, 2004
Expenses are Reported in Millions

Heart conditions	90,043.98
Cancer	62,230.46
Trauma-related disorders	58,542.28
Mental disorders	51,974.25
COPD, asthma	48,689.94
Hypertension	37,854.88
Osteoarthritis and other non-traumatic joint disorders	34,888.42
Diabetes mellitus	30,702.76
Back problems	29,625.64
Normal birth/live born	29,293.81
Gallbladder, pancreatic, and liver disease	28,644.37
Other circulatory conditions arteries, veins, and lymphatics	24,025.45
Kidney Disease	23,376.59
Disorders of the upper GI	21,502.76
Hyperlipidemia	21,317.42
Other care and screening	20,741.05
Skin disorders	17,992.70
Systemic lupus and connective tissues disorders	17,820.90
Other CNS disorders	17,466.02
Infectious diseases	14,670.28
Residual Codes	14,657.28
Cerebrovascular disease	13,992.40
Other endocrine, nutritional & immune disorder	13,127.75
Pneumonia	12,629.13
Female genital disorders, and contraception	12,588.82
Other GI	9,966.31
Coma, brain damage	9,344.13*
Symptoms	8,671.52
Other eye disorders	8,272.26
Epilepsy and convulsions	8,075.06*
Other bone and musculoskeletal disease	7,692.62
Acute Bronchitis and URI	7,387.55
Thyroid disease	6,995.93
Hereditary, degenerative and other nervous system disorders	6,267.56
Headache	5,966.63
Cataract	5,927.15
Urinary tract infections	5,875.57
Other stomach and intestinal disorders	5,698.15

Hernias	5,124.28
Other urinary	4,656.37
Non-malignant neoplasm	4,447.47
Congenital anomalies	4,044.10
Intestinal infection	3,729.67
Paralysis	3,612.16*
Otitis media	3,522.65
Anemia and other deficiencies	3,269.66
Glaucoma	3,149.78
Male genital disorders	3,134.41
Complications of surgery or device	2,819.68*
Hemorrhagic, coagulation, and disorders of White Blood cells	2,222.95
Poisoning by medical and non-medical substances	2,153.75
Disorders of teeth and jaws	2,146.31*
Non-malignant breast disease	2,099.83
Allergic reactions	1,951.12
Perinatal Conditions	1,916.37*
Complications of pregnancy and birth	1,323.47
Tonsillitis	1,305.13
Appendicitis	1,190.19*
Influenza	969.93
CNS infection	701.77*
Disorders of mouth and esophagus	305.35*

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Office of the Actuary, National Health Statistics Group