

## The Economics of Spinal Cord Injury

### Direct Costs of Spinal Cord Injury:

*(Includes personal care attendants, medical supplies, medications, durable medical equipment home/other environmental modifications and transportation)*

Spinal Cord Injury Average Yearly Expenses (in 2004 dollars)		
Severity of Injury	First Year	Each Subsequent Year
High Tetraplegia (C1-C4)	\$682,957	\$122,334
Low Tetraplegia (C5-C8)	\$441,025	\$50,110
Paraplegia	\$249,549	\$25,394
Incomplete Motor Functional at any Level	\$201,273	\$14,106

Source: Spinal Cord Injury Information Center; [www.spinalcord.uab.edu](http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu)

- 1) Initial direct cost of care of the newly injured patients per year: \$4.4 billion.
- 2) Post first year direct annual cost of care for chronic injuries: \$14.9 billion
- 3) Estimated savings in cost of care for even **modest recovery** of function and sensation; e. g. allowing patients with tetraplegia to regain the use of their hands: \$9 billion

### Indirect Costs of Spinal Cord Injury:

Spinal Cord Injury Employment Rate		
Severity of Injury	Pre-Injury	10 years Post-Injury
Tetraplegia	63.0%	26.4%
Paraplegia	63.0%	31.7%
<i>Note: pre-injury employment rates are low compared to the general adult population due to the great percentage of young adults between 16-35 sustaining injuries.</i>		

Source: Spinal Cord Injury Information Center; [www.spinalcord.uab.edu](http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu)

- 1) Post-injury, many spinal cord injured patients experience unemployment, reduced employment, or must change employment. This results in significant loss of productivity and contributions to the US tax coffers.
- 2) Loss of wages, fringe benefits, and productivity average \$57,000\* per spinal cord injured patient per year. Using a spinal cord injury prevalence of 280,000-450,000\*\*, this translates to an estimated \$16- \$26 billion annually.

\*Source: Spinal Cord Injury Information Center; [www.spinalcord.uab.edu](http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu)

\*\*Spinal cord injury statistics are not routinely captured and are based on extrapolated data. The most widely published prevalence is 222,000-285,000; some sources suggest the number is as high as 450,000.