

Severe obesity a billion dollar taxpayer issue

By Soumya Karlamangla, Los Angeles Times

We know obesity increases your risk of having high blood pressure, getting diabetes and being diagnosed with certain cancers. Now it turns out it can also increase costs for your state government.

A study published Monday in the journal Health Affairs found that medical care associated with severe obesity cost state-run health programs \$8 billion in 2013. California's program for the poor, known as Medi-Cal, took the biggest hit, spending \$1.3 billion that year on severe obesity-related care.

Though the obesity epidemic in America has garnered a lot of attention, there hasn't been enough focus on severe obesity, which has much bigger health risks and associated costs, said Michael Long, study author and assistant professor of prevention and community health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University.

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