

Cost and consequences of health care infections

Health care-associated infections cause direct medical costs as high as \$45 billion annually in U.S. hospitals, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports. The recent CDC report included the following range of costs associated with specific infections:

- **Surgical-site infections (SSIs):** The cost of an SSI included a low estimate of \$10,443 per infection in 2005 dollars and a high estimate of \$25,546 per infection in 2002 dollars.

- **Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI):** The cost estimates ranged from \$5,734 to \$22,939 in 2003 dollars.

- **Ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP):** The studies used for the estimates on VAP cited a low of \$11,897 in 1999 dollars and a high of \$25,072 in 2005 dollars.

- **Catheter-associated urinary-tract infections (CAUTI):** The costs associated with CAUTI ranged from \$589 to \$758.

- ***Clostridium difficile*-associated disease (CDI):** The costs associated with CDI ranged from \$5,042 to \$7,179.

(Editor's note: The full CDC report, "The Direct Medical Costs of Healthcare-Associated Infections in U.S. Hospitals and the Benefits of Prevention," is available at: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/.) ■