

Vaccines:

A high-return investment for America's health and our nation's economy

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Vaccines are one of the best tools we have to keep Americans healthy and prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and deaths.

In doing so, routine immunizations not only help protect Americans' health but also reduce health care costs, support a more productive workforce and strengthen the nation's economy.

This brief outlines how:

- Vaccines reduce health care costs by preventing severe disease, hospitalizations and deaths.
- America strengthens its economic stability by increasing tax revenue and lowering costs for taxpayers and public programs with vaccines.
- Smart, evidence-based policy is essential to sustaining vaccines' return on investment for America.

Delivering Lifesaving Protection and Lasting Value

Vaccines are a cornerstone of public health—helping to eliminate or control some of the most dangerous diseases, from polio to measles, and saving millions of lives.

Built on decades of rigorous research, clinical trials and ongoing safety monitoring, vaccines remain one of the most effective and trusted tools to prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and deaths.

Beyond these lifesaving benefits, vaccines also deliver significant economic value for America.

By preventing illness before it occurs, vaccines reduce strain on the health care system, support workforce participation and avoid costly disruptions for families and employers.

Looking ahead, it's critical to ensure vaccines are available and accessible—without unnecessary barriers—**allowing every American to protect themselves, their families and their communities.**

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Vaccines Reduce Health Care Costs:

Preventing Severe Disease, Hospitalizations and Deaths

Every illness, hospitalization and death avoided also helps reduce downstream costs for families, health systems and public programs.

Over their lifetimes, routine vaccination among children born during 1994-2023 is projected to prevent:¹



508 million cases of illness



32 million hospitalizations – roughly comparable to a year's worth of inpatient hospital stays across the U.S.²



1 million+ deaths

These avoided health outcomes also translate into major savings:³



\$540 billion in direct savings



\$2.7 trillion in societal savings

These savings reflect avoided doctor visits, hospital stays, emergency responses, lost work time and long-term costs tied to disability or death. Vaccines protect children when they are most vulnerable, preventing serious illness and avoiding long-term health and economic costs.

Vaccines Strengthen Economic Stability:

Increasing Tax Revenue and Lowering Costs

Every \$1 invested in vaccination generates \$17.80 in benefits for taxpayers and public budgets.⁴ These returns come from preventing illness, reducing health care spending, helping people stay healthy and productive and lowering costs associated with disability.

Vaccine-preventable illnesses create costs that ripple throughout the economy. When people get sick, they miss work, lose income, require medical care and may need additional support from public programs. In severe cases, these illnesses can lead to long-term disability or death, reducing workforce participation and putting a strain on the system.

When vaccine-preventable diseases occur, the economic impact can be substantial:



\$13 billion

in lost productivity due to the 2023-2024 influenza season⁵



\$29.5 million

in lost productivity expected from a 1,500-case outbreak of measles⁶



\$62 billion

annual value of lost labor supply from COVID-19 illness⁷

Vaccination helps prevent these losses by reducing illness, limiting caregiver disruptions and helping Americans stay healthy, working and productive.

For the 2017 U.S. birth cohort, publicly financed childhood vaccination generated \$41.7 billion in net fiscal benefits, including:⁸



\$30.6 billion

in averted tax losses



\$8.6 billion

in health care savings



\$1.6 billion

in reduced disability transfers



\$910 million

in reduced special education costs

Evidence-based Policy:

Essential to Sustaining Vaccines' Return on Investment

Vaccines' return on investment depends on smart policies that keep routine vaccination accessible and grounded in science. When policy weakens vaccine uptake or delays protection, preventable disease can increase – raising health care costs, reducing productivity and creating avoidable emergencies and public health outbreaks.

By the numbers:

Smart policy lowers barriers to vaccination and protects uptake

- Cost-sharing creates a measurable barrier to vaccination:
Every \$1 increase in copayment = 1%-6% reduction in vaccination coverage.⁹
- Removing cost-sharing as a barrier has been proven to increase vaccine uptake, improve health outcomes and reduce long-term health care costs.
- Eliminating cost-sharing for recommended vaccines under Medicare Part D led to a **46%** increase in uptake of the shingles vaccine and enrollees saved an estimated **\$300 million** in shingles vaccine costs.^{10, 11}



\$300M

Undermining evidence-based recommendations can create avoidable costs

- Since the birth dose was introduced in the U.S., cases of hepatitis B – a serious, life-threatening illness – in kids and teens have dropped by **99%.**¹²
- Research shows that delaying the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine from birth to two months could lead to additional cases and avoidable deaths, and over **\$16 million in added health care costs** in a single year – with longer delays leading to even more adverse outcomes.¹³
- Changes to vaccine recommendations that are not supported by scientific evidence can also create confusion for providers, patients and health systems. When recommendations become more complex or less clear, vaccination may be delayed or missed, increasing the risk of preventable illness and associated health care and economic costs.



99%

Vaccine policy driven by scientific data is critical to protect people from illness and avert added costs to the health care system and economy.

By preventing avoidable illness, vaccines reduce health care spending, bolster workforce participation and tax revenue and help avert costly public health emergencies.

Continuing to prioritize evidence-based vaccine policy is essential to maintaining these benefits for patients, sustaining a strong and productive workforce and bolstering the long-term resilience of the American economy.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7331a2.htm>

²<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK580169/>

³<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7331a2.htm>

⁴<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37851624/>

⁵<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.64898/2025.12.23.25342685v1>

⁶<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264410X25011272>

⁷https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30435/w30435.pdf

⁸<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37851624/>

⁹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314482681_The_Cost_of_Cost-Sharing_The_Impact_of_Medicaid_Benefit_Design_on_Influenza_Vaccination_Uptake

¹⁰<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11117145/>

¹¹<https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/25c8a374dfc934060bfd88c08b1d5971/part-d-covered-vaccines-no-cost-sharing.pdf>

¹²<https://www.chop.edu/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-details/hepatitis-b-vaccine>

¹³https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2848162?_cf_chl_tk=bTTmclbg2fympWvbyPGSFXzvXjs4DphDHrtSQdDz3b4-1778704881-1.0.1.1-7AWR5i7kj0r8gnth1kdIPnAx77NKYi8MO8CvNy3P8fw