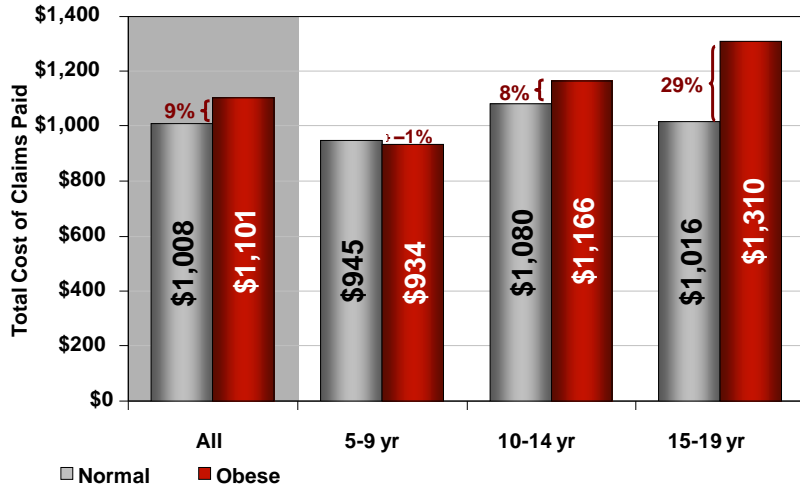


Cost of Childhood Obesity among Medicaid/SCHIP Enrollees in Arkansas

Average Annual Total Cost by Age Group among Arkansas Enrollees (5-19 years) in Traditional, SCHIP and AFDC Medicaid Programs

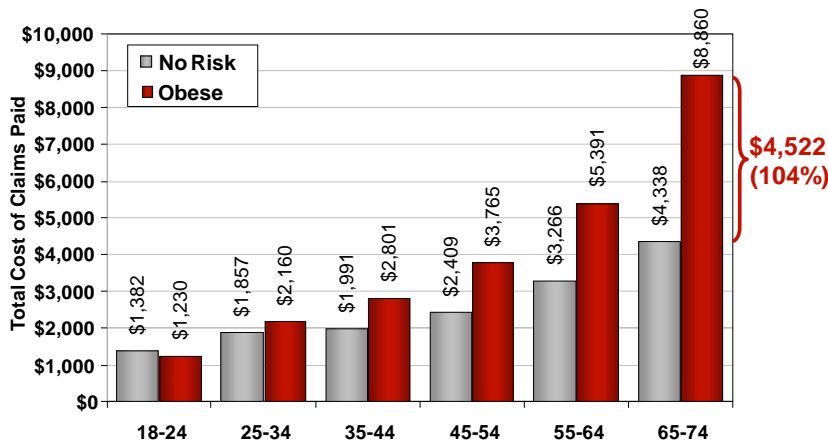


Total costs are payments for medical (outpatient and inpatient), pharmacy, and dental claims. Claims period 1/1/03–6/30/05. Data source: Card-Higginson P, Thompson JW, Shaw JL, Lein S. Cost and health impact of childhood obesity among Medicaid/SCHIP enrollees. 2008 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, Washington, DC, June 9, 2008.

- ACHI linked Medicaid claims data with school-based BMI assessments. The cost of care was evaluated for 60,928 children enrolled over a 30 month period.
- The difference in average annual total cost was statistically different between normal weight and obese enrollees ($p < .001$).
- The cost differential between normal and obese increased with age to a 29% higher cost among obese 15-19 year olds compared with their normal weight counterparts.
- Childhood obesity is considered a risk factor, not a reimbursable condition, under existing Congressional authorization for Medicaid/SCHIP services. Failure to resolve this financial barrier has substantial long-term health and cost implications for the U.S. and restricts states' ability to optimally address a recognized threat to children's health.

Health Care Plan Cost—Variation by Obesity Classification and Age Group

Average Annual Total Costs by Age Group among Arkansas State Employees



Total costs are payments for medical (outpatient and inpatient) and pharmacy claims for state employees. Claims period 10/1/04–2/28/06. Using self-reported height and weight, individuals with a BMI of 30 or higher were classified as obese. The no risk group comprised individuals who were normal weight, did not use tobacco and engaged in physical activity 5 days/week or more. Data source: Card-Higginson P, Jaster R, Shaw JL, Pinidiya SD, Lein S, Thompson JW. Health care plan cost variation by obesity classification and age group. 2008 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, Washington, DC, June 10, 2008.

- The impact of obesity on the Arkansas State and Public School Employees' health plan costs was assessed using self-reported, voluntary health risk assessment (HRA) data and plan claims.
- Among the 43,461 individuals who completed the HRA and had linked health claims data; 11% (4,720) had no risks and 32% (13,815) were obese.
- The average annual costs totaled \$2,382 for the no-risk group. Those who were obese incurred 1.54-fold higher annual costs (\$3,679) than those with no risks.
- Overall, costs increased with age, but at a greater rate for obese compared with no-risk individuals.
- These results inform potential cost containment strategies and provide information that can inform future actuarial projections for the state plan and federal programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare.