

Annual Cost of Maine's Substance Abuse Epidemic, 2015

Rates of substance abuse and overdose have increased dramatically in recent years. In 2016, Maine legislators passed a bipartisan package of measures aimed at tackling what is regarded as a statewide crisis. LD633, “An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Citizens and the Economy of Maine by Providing Affordable Market-based Coverage Options to Low-Income Uninsured Citizens” presents another opportunity to tackle this problem by improving access to treatment for tens of thousands of Mainers. Nationwide, 44% of opioid abusers are uninsured, and lack of insurance is a significant barrier to treatment and recovery.

The costs of expanding access to insurance are a tiny fraction of the total cost of substance abuse on Maine's economy. The most comprehensive report on this topic was conducted in 2013 for the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services using 2010 data. Where possible, the figures have been updated, using more recent data (which has, in almost every case, increased the total cost, as substance abuse has increased in Maine in recent years). All costs have been adjusted for inflation. All costs are those attributable to drug abuse alone – alcohol abuse costs have been excluded.

Taken together, the above indicate that this is likely a significant *underestimate* of the total annual cost in 2015.

	Direct cost (public)	Indirect Cost (private)	Total Cost
Law Enforcement			
Drug Control Efforts¹ Maine's per-capita costs of drug enforcement, 2015.	\$114,622,000		\$114,622,000
State Corrections² 887 inmates on drug-related offences in 2010.	\$44,430,000		\$44,430,000
County Corrections³ 161 county inmates on drug-related offences in 2010.	\$23,215,000		\$23,215,000
Drug Arrests⁴ 5003 arrests in 2014.	\$21,818,000	\$5,840,000	\$27,658,000
Other Drug Arrests⁵ Fraction of total arrests attributable to substance abuse (e.g. 30% of all robberies).	\$11,900,000		\$11,900,000
Legal Costs for Drug Offences⁶ 5003 arrests in 2014. Includes legal fees and court costs.	\$9,461,000		\$9,461,000
Legal Costs for Other Drug Arrests⁷ Fraction of total arrests attributable to substance abuse.	\$5,170,000		\$5,170,000
Overdoses			
Emergency Calls⁸ 2,947 calls in 2014.	\$2,947,000		\$2,947,000
Overdose Deaths⁹ 230 (est.) in 2015.		\$317,641,000	\$317,641,000
Societal			
Morbidity Costs¹⁰ Loss of productivity for workers and homemakers from substance abuse – 29,289 people in 2010.		\$54,084,000	\$54,084,000
Productivity loss from incarceration¹¹ 1,189 person-years lost in 2010.		\$50,296,000	\$50,296,000
Property destruction from crime¹² Primarily robberies, larcenies and theft.		\$6,984,000	\$6,984,000
Victim productivity loss¹³ Time off work, medical care of victims.		\$2,753,000	\$2,753,000
Treatment			
Addiction Treatment¹⁴ Includes state and federal costs. 10,225 treatments in 2014.	\$22,120,000		\$22,120,000
Other medical care¹⁵ Includes state and federal costs. Fraction of all in- and outpatient services attributable to substance abuse.	\$45,104,000	\$11,918,000	\$57,022,000
Total Annual Cost	\$300,787,000	\$449,516,000	\$750,303,000

Sources

The Cost of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Maine, 2010, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, 2013

Substance Abuse Trends in Maine State Epidemiological Profile 2014, Hornby Zeller Associates for Maine Department of Health and Human Services, 2014

¹ *DHHS 2013*, table 5.3 “Drug Control Expenditures”, updated with data from U.S. Department of Justice; National Drug Control Strategy, 2015.

² *DHHS 2013*, table 5.6 “Estimated Cost of State Corrections,” data from Maine Department of Corrections. Includes drug offences and fractions of other offences that are attributable to substance abuse.

³ *DHHS 2013*, table 5.7 “Estimated Cost of County Corrections,” data from US Department of Justice and Cumberland County Statistics. Includes drug offences and fractions of other offences that are attributable to substance abuse.

⁴ *DHHS 2013*, table 5.2 “Estimated Cost of Police Protection,” data from Maine Department of Public Safety. 2014 drug crime arrest figures from *DHHS 2014*

⁵ *Ibid.*, but no update in figures.

⁶ *DHHS 2013*, table 5.5 “Legal and adjudication costs,” data from Maine Department of Public Safety. Cost-per offence data from Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2002 data.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *DHHS 2014*. Cost-per-call is \$1,000, the average cost of an ambulance ride to the emergency room. Cost of EMS technicians’ time and other medical services not included.

⁹ *DHHS 2013*, table 4.1, with figures updated for 2015. Estimated number of fatal overdoses from the Office of the Attorney General.

¹⁰ *DHHS 2013*, table 3.3. Data from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

¹¹ *DHHS 2013*, table 5.8. Data from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

¹² *DHHS 2013*, table 5.9. Data from Maine Department of Public Safety.

¹³ *DHHS 2013*, table 5.10. Data from Maine Department of Public Safety.

¹⁴ *DHHS 2013*, table 2.1. Data from Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, Treatment Data Set. Updated with figures from *DHHS 2014*.

¹⁵ *DHHS 2013*, table 6.3C. Data from Maine Health Data Organization.