



# Estimating the Economic Burden of the Opioid Epidemic

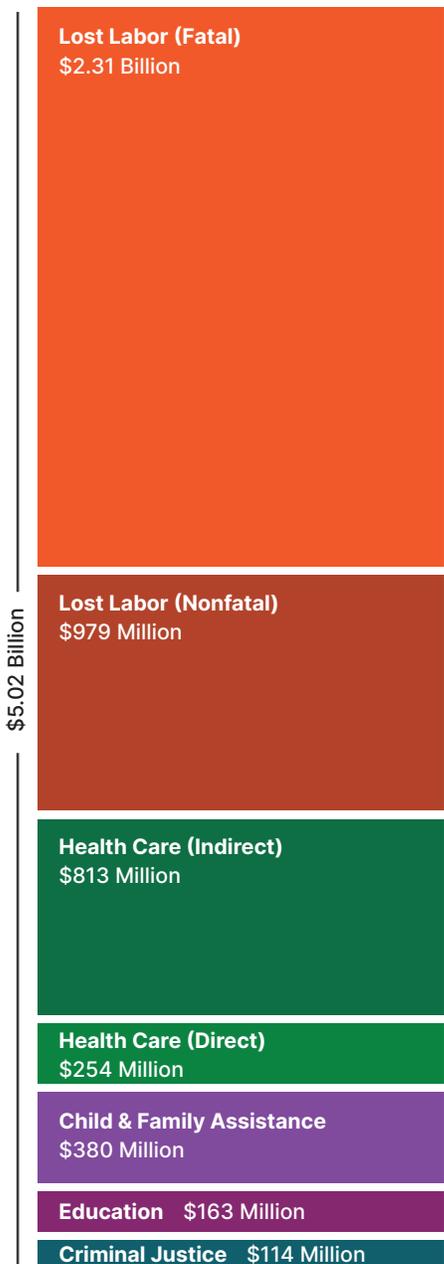
*The annual economic burden of the opioid epidemic in Virginia is estimated to have reached \$5.02 billion in 2021. This burden is carried by Virginia's workers, employers, and governments, and includes both future losses and current direct spending that could have been avoided.*

## The Cost of the Opioid Epidemic

The opioid epidemic has cost citizens through lost labor, health care, and other costs, which include education, child/family assistance, and criminal justice.

Cost per Virginian:  
**\$580/Person**

Total Costs:  
**\$5.02 Billion**



### Lost Labor Costs, \$3.30B

The cost of lost labor was calculated by counting opioid-related deaths, non-fatal cases of opioid use disorder, and incarcerations due to opioids. Next, we predicted the average earnings of these individuals combined. This prediction was based on Virginia residents of similar ages holding a high school diploma.

### Health Care, \$1.07B

The health care total combines direct and indirect health care cost in each locality. Direct costs represent emergency and inpatient visits for

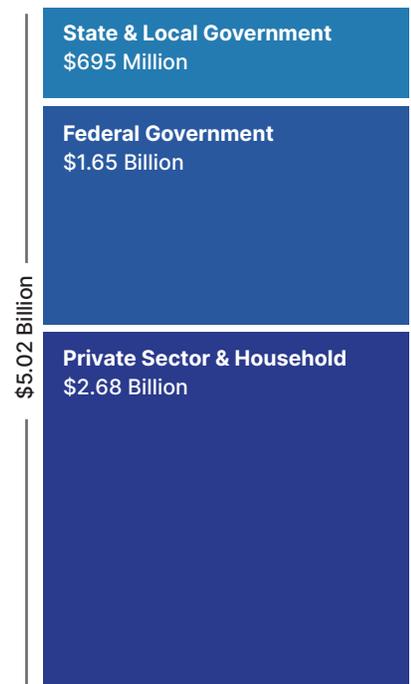
opioid overdose, and other opioid-related visits. Indirect costs represent treatment for opioid-related conditions, such as HIV and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

### Other Costs, \$657M

The crime/other figure estimates government expenditures for public services needed to respond to the opioid epidemic, mainly criminal justice costs, child and family assistance costs, and education costs. In this calculation, we include the economic burden on households, local, state, and federal government.

### Who covered the costs?

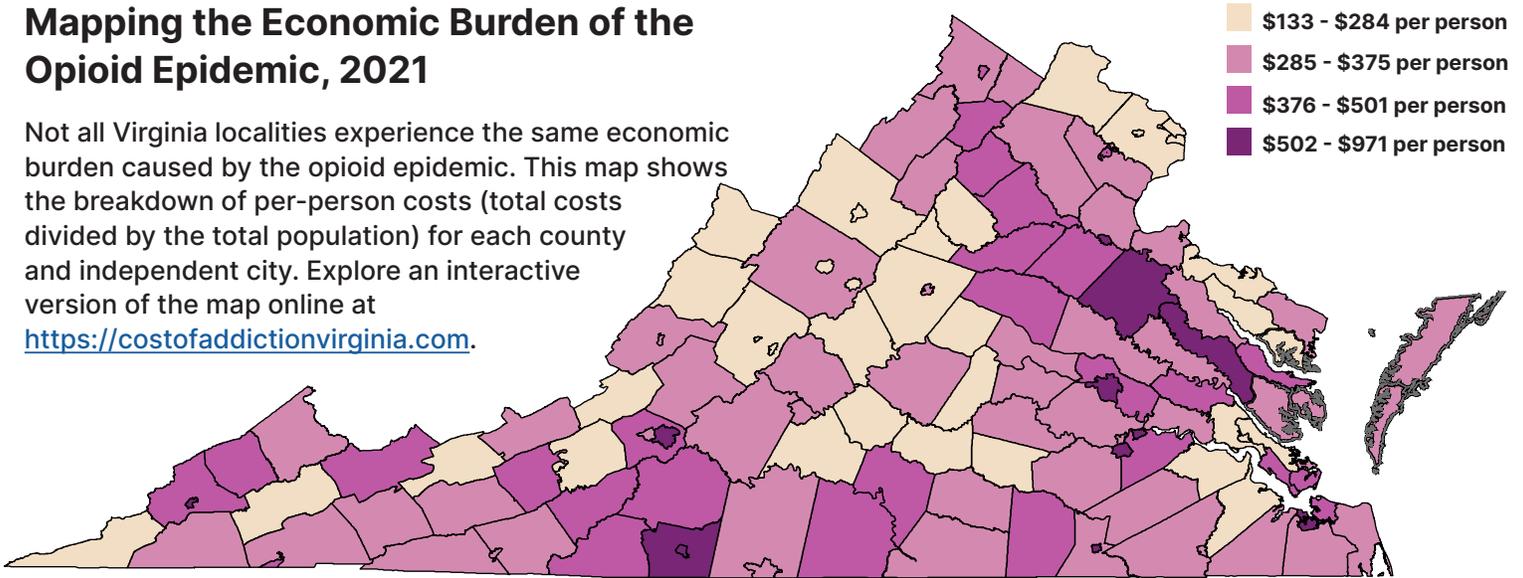
The cost burden of the opioid epidemic is split among several sectors. Virginia families and businesses take on a large share of these costs, mostly due to lost wages and increased private healthcare costs. Federal, state, and local governments also see increased healthcare and administrative costs. Additionally, governments lose future tax revenues. More information on the data and data collection process is available in the methods report available at [https://costofaddictionvirginia.com/files/VA\\_CostofOpioids\\_Methods\\_Aug2023.pdf](https://costofaddictionvirginia.com/files/VA_CostofOpioids_Methods_Aug2023.pdf).





# Mapping the Economic Burden of the Opioid Epidemic, 2021

Not all Virginia localities experience the same economic burden caused by the opioid epidemic. This map shows the breakdown of per-person costs (total costs divided by the total population) for each county and independent city. Explore an interactive version of the map online at <https://costofaddictionvirginia.com>.



## Wide-Reaching Impact on Health Care

The opioid epidemic had major direct and indirect effects on health care in Virginia. In 2021, direct costs from overdoses, hospital stays, and emergency department (ED) visits went over \$255 million. Indirect costs reached \$813 million, as increased cases of opioid use disorder led to more chronic diseases. Hospitalizations formed the biggest direct cost, mainly due to higher expenses per visit. Indirect costs exceeded direct costs, covering things like increased cases of hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) due to the opioid epidemic.

### \$813M Indirect Health Care Costs

Indirect costs include coverage for ailments caused by Opioid usage including HIV, HBV, HCV, TB, NAS, and other conditions.



### \$255M Direct Health Care Costs

Hospitalizations/Other, \$203M



ED Visits, \$35M



Ambulance & Naloxone, \$16M



### Localities with Highest Total Costs per Person

Locality	Per Person
Petersburg City	\$1,925
Norton City	\$1,862
Richmond City	\$1,796
Portsmouth City	\$1,758
Hopewell City	\$1,715

### Localities with Highest Total Costs

Locality	Per Person
Richmond City	\$408.7M
Henrico County	\$274.6M
Fairfax County	\$261.8M
Chesterfield County	\$253.6M
Norfolk City	\$231.0M

## About the Center on Society and Health

The Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University is a research center studying how social factors, like education and income, affect health. We provide objective research to decision-makers and community partners, from global to local levels.