



Estimating the Economic Burden of the Opioid Epidemic

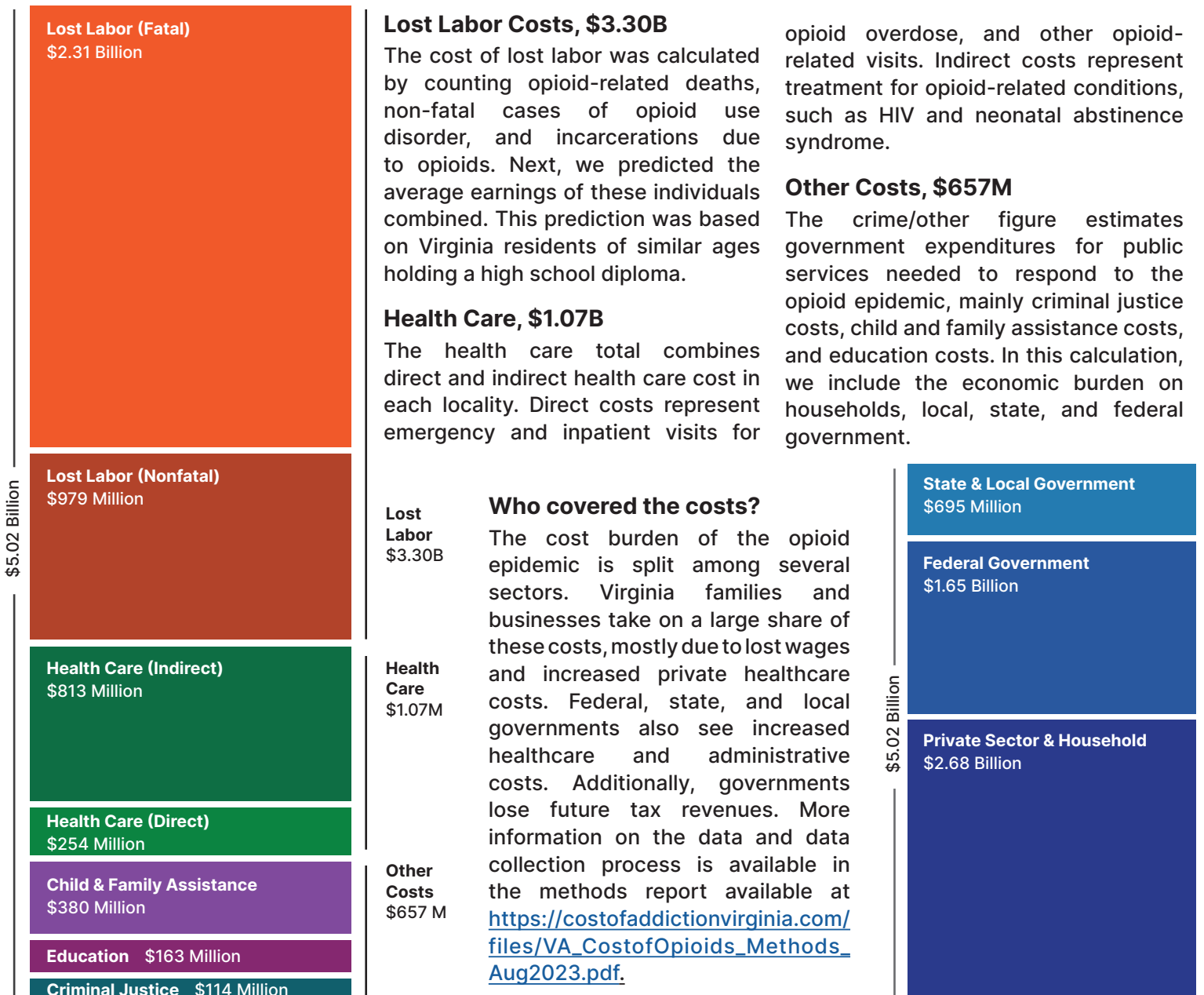
The annual economic burden of the opioid epidemic in Virginia is estimated to have reached \$5.02 billion in 2021. This burden is carried by Virginia's workers, employers, and governments, and includes both future losses and current direct spending that could have been avoided.

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.

