

Indicator #19: Workers' Compensation Awards

Background and Public Health Significance

Workers' compensation is a state-based social insurance program that was developed to provide guaranteed compensation for workers with work-related injuries or illnesses. Workers' compensation provides benefits to partially replace lost wages and pay for medical expenses due to a work-related injury or illness. If death occurs, the worker's dependents are eligible for survivor benefits.

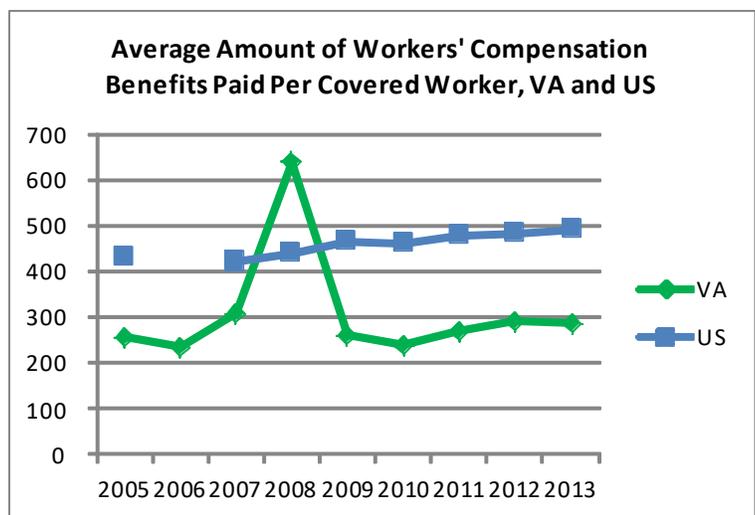
Due to the substantial differences between states in wages, medical costs, workers' compensation eligibility, reimbursement, and other administrative regulations governing workers' compensation, this occupational health indicator should only be used to monitor trends within states rather than comparison of different states.

Data source: National Academy of Social Insurance (www.nasi.org)

Rationale:

Workers' compensation awards are reviewed to establish whether the reported medical condition is work-related. Accepted awards represent known work-related injuries and illnesses, and often more severe cases. The total and average amounts of benefits paid estimate the burden of these events, which can help justify prevention programs and activities.

	19.1 Total Amount of Worker's Compensation Benefits Paid	19.2 Average Amount of Workers' Comp. Benefits Paid Per Covered Worker
2005	854,165,000	255
2006	807,404,000	237
2007	1,069,374,000	311
2008	2,192,885,000	642
2009	859,727,000	261
2010	785,680,000	240
2011	891,958,000	269
2012	979,538,000	292
2013	953,165,000	287
2014	-	-



Limitations

This is a gross indicator of the burden of occupational injury and illness. It does not include human, noneconomic costs nor all the economic costs associated with occupational injuries and illnesses. These data are more appropriate for evaluating trends within a state rather than comparisons between states because of differences in wages and medical costs, the compensation determination, industry types and risks, and policies on permanent disability payments.

Workers' compensation data are not complete, as the majority of individuals with work-related illnesses and many with work-related injuries do not file for workers' compensation. Workers' compensation claims may be denied. The number of days away from work required before a case is recorded in the workers' compensation system will vary by state. Additionally, self-employed individuals such as farmers and independent contractors, federal employees, railroad or longshore and maritime workers may not be covered by state workers' compensation systems. Compensation award payments are frequently made over time, thus annual awards may not reflect the full cost of injuries and illnesses for a given year.