

LEARN MORE BREATHE BETTER®

A PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH



COPD is the
6th leading
cause of death
in the US¹

It is more
common in
women
(**60%**
of COPD
patients are
women)²

COPD is more
common in
rural areas
(**9%**)
than urban
(**4%**)³

75%
of COPD patients
have a history
of smoking;
25%
have never
smoked⁴

COPD: A National Health Issue

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a leading cause of disability and death in the United States, with more than 150,000 deaths annually. Millions of Americans have been diagnosed with COPD, and millions more have the disease and don't know it.

Also known as emphysema or chronic bronchitis, COPD imposes an enormous burden on individuals affected, their caregivers, and the nation's health care system. Associated national medical costs were projected to increase from \$32.1 billion in 2010 to \$49 billion in 2020.

The disease develops slowly, with symptoms gradually worsening over time, limiting the ability to do routine activities. Signs and symptoms are often brushed off as a natural part of aging, and, as a result, COPD is often not diagnosed until symptoms are severe and critical lung function is lost. Gone undiagnosed, severe COPD may prevent individuals from doing basic activities, such as walking, cooking, or taking care of themselves. But, with early diagnosis and treatment, people with COPD can improve their quality of life and begin to breathe more easily.

WHO HAS COPD⁵

9%
AMERICAN INDIANS/
ALASKA NATIVES

5%
BLACKS

5%
WHITES

2%
HISPANICS

1%
ASIANS

In 2017, the NIH and CDC released the *COPD National Action Plan*—the first-ever blueprint for a multi-faceted, unified fight against the disease. Developed at the request of Congress, it provides a comprehensive framework for action for those affected by the disease and those who care about reducing its burden. The *COPD National Action Plan Community Action Tool* helps track progress towards its implementation. Learn more about it and enter your activities at cnap.nhlbi.nih.gov.

The *Learn More Breathe Better*® program works to increase awareness of the disease and encourages those with symptoms to talk with their healthcare provider. It coordinates the *Breathe Better Network*, a partnership of organizations around the country interested in bringing greater attention to COPD in their communities.

Visit COPD.nhlbi.nih.gov to learn more.

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¹USPSTF "Screening for COPD Recommendation Statement" JAMA. 2022;327(18):1806-1811.

²National Health Interview Survey 2020.

³Ibid.

⁴CDC "COPD Prevalence Among Adults Who Have Never Smoked," *MMWR*, April 5, 2019.

⁵National Health Interview Survey 2020.