Diabetes is growing at an epidemic rate in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 30 million Americans have diabetes and face its devastating consequences. What’s true nationwide is also true in Tennessee.

Tennessee’s diabetes epidemic:

Approximately 817,852 people in Tennessee, or 14.9% of the adult population, have diabetes.

- Of these, an estimated 161,000 have diabetes but don’t know it, greatly increasing their health risk.
- In addition, 1,733,000 people in Tennessee, 35.8% of the adult population, have prediabetes with blood glucose levels higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.
- Every year an estimated 38,000 people in Tennessee are diagnosed with diabetes.

Diabetes is expensive:

People with diabetes have medical expenses approximately 2.3 times higher than those who do not have diabetes.

- Total direct medical expenses for diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetes and gestational diabetes in Tennessee was estimated at $4.9 billion in 2012.
- In addition, another $1.7 billion was spent on indirect costs from lost productivity due to diabetes.

Improving lives, preventing diabetes and finding a cure:

In 2015, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at the National Institutes of Health invested $43,157,313 in diabetes-related research projects in Tennessee. The Division of Diabetes Translation at the CDC spent $1,313,541 on diabetes prevention and educational programs in Tennessee in 2016.

Sources include:
- Cost: Dall et al.