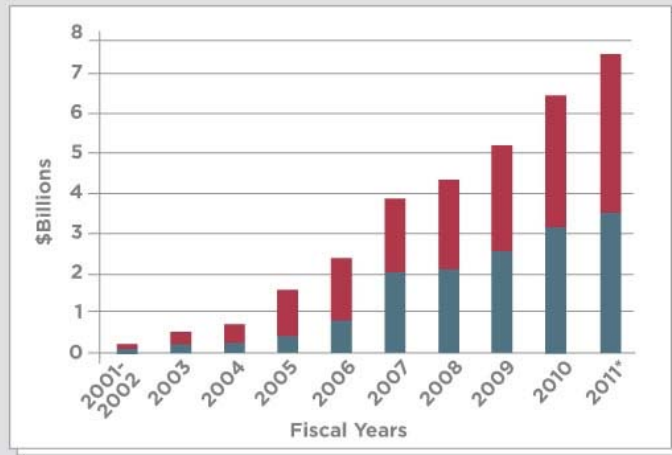


COSTS OF WAR

More than \$32 Billion in Medical and Disability Spending for Afghanistan and Iraq War Veterans, 2001-2011*

- Disability
- Medical Care

* Not including Medical Costs for those still serving and not including pending claims for disability. In \$2011.



Caring for US Veterans

As of December 2010, 1.25 million service men and women had returned home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Many have been wounded or injured in some way — over 90,000 seriously enough to require medical evacuation from the conflict. A much larger number suffer from other injuries, ranging from brain injuries to hearing loss. To date, 650,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have been treated in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities for a wide range of medical conditions. Nearly 500,000 of these veterans are receiving compensation from the VA for injuries sustained or worsened during their military service. The US has already spent \$32.6 billion in constant dollars providing medical care and disability benefits to these veterans.



Army Spc. Danielle Green, center, works with occupational therapist Theresa Yallone, left, and Army Capt. Katie Yancosek to prepare for a prosthetic device, June 30, 2004. Green, a former Notre Dame College basketball star, lost her hand and part of her forearm after being hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in Baghdad last month. (AP Photo/Matt Houston)

But our commitment to veterans continues after the war ends.

The service members who have been deployed to the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts are entitled to receive free or subsidized medical treatment for the rest of their lives. In addition, a significant percentage of them are eligible to receive permanent disability compensation for physical and/or mental disabilities stemming from their wartime service. Veterans of the current wars are also entitled to receive certain educational, housing, training and other benefits funded by government agencies outside of VA.

The history of previous wars shows that the cost of caring for war veterans rises for several decades and peaks 30 to 40 years or more after a conflict. This will be especially true for veterans of the current wars. Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are utilizing

VA medical services and applying for disability benefits at much higher rates than in previous wars. Based on current patterns of benefit claims and medical usage, it is estimated that the total present value of such costs for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans over the next 40 years is in the range of \$600 billion to \$1 trillion.

In addition, there are significant social-economic costs that will be borne by these veterans and their families, including factors such as family members who give up paid employment to become unpaid caregivers, loss of income for self-employed service members, and diminished quality of life.

Finally, although veterans' care comprises the fourth largest category of government spending, the magnitude of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans' costs is grossly understated in government projections. There is no provision set aside to cover these future obligations. Given that our pledge to care for veterans is a form of "deferred

KEY FINDINGS

- 650,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have already been treated in VA facilities
- the cost of caring for war veterans peaks 30 to 40 years after a conflict
- future medical and disability costs for Iraq and Afghanistan vets will be between \$600 billion and \$1 trillion
- uncompensated costs include loss of income for injured veterans' family caregivers

compensation", we should appropriate funds for these inevitable long-term costs at the time we budget for the wars in which they will fight.

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