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New York State Diabetes-Related Amputation: A Horror Story

Estimated 50,000 New York Residents Lose Limbs/Feet to Diabetes-Related Amputations Since 2009

New York's 84% Pre-Covid-19 Increase in Amputations from 2009-2017 is almost double the National Increase

Pandemic Accelerates Limb Loss as Regular Care Collapses

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New York State had an estimated 50,000 diabetes-related lower limb amputations from 2009 to 2021. These amputations can range from toe removals to amputation above the knee. Either way, they are a disaster. The 5-year death rate after "minor" amputations is 29% and it is 57% after major amputations.¹

These amputations are also highly preventable. Early clinical intervention to address the ulcers, neuropathy and other foot pathology that is common in diabetes because of poor circulation, can slash amputation rates. Providing patients with effective self-management education also demonstrably reduces amputations rates. Diabetes-related lower limb amputations, in fact, are so preventable that they are one of only 14 categories of "potentially preventable hospitalizations" that the federal government annually monitors as a major gauge of a state's attention to preventive health.²

New York State has completely failed that test. Between 2009, the first year the state reported on preventable hospitalizations, until 2017, the most recent year New York State released this information, its reported rates of increase diabetes amputations meant that the number of amputations soared by 84.1%.³ This included a staggering 92.4% increase for New York City, with three boroughs--- the Bronx, Queens and Manhattan, where the number of amputations increased by 95% or more. This is compared to a 47% increase nationwide during the same time period.⁴

2021. In numbers, this means a projected

Kings	364	369	355	342	374	392	403	559	607	66.8%
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contradictory trends in New York would have impacted its diabetes-related amputation numbers in 2020 and 2021. On the one hand, routine care virtually collapsed in many clinical centers as the city and state were overwhelmed by Covid-19 cases. Lack of routine care is well documented to accelerate diabetes-related amputation; on the other hand, in 2020, during the first Covid-19 surge, the city and state sustained astounding numbers of diabetes deaths. New York State had the highest diabetes death rate of any state and New York City had a 356% increase in diabetes deaths, the largest increase of any major city or state in the nation.⁷ Almost certainly some portion of these deaths represented sicker people with diabetes already experiencing

This contempt—there is no other word—for the basic health of people with diabetes exists even though it is perfectly clear that logical, proven steps to reduce amputations can also slash New York’s staggering Medicaid costs. The state’s average \$15,336 “excess cost” for Medicaid patients with diabetes—their annual cost tu336 stagt to svha35009 (t)4.9 p2 (s)-4.47-0.7 (u)-52 (e)-6 7 (u)-n8 (g)5.7 (t)]TJ0.1 (t)-5-0

Citations

1. Armstrong, D.G., Swerdlow, M.A., Armstrong, A.A. et al. Five year mortality and direct costs of care for people with diabetic foot complications are comparable to cancer. J Foot Ankle Res 13, 16 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13047-020-00383-2>