

CDC: Medical bills a burden for many U.S. families

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

A crushing medical bill can cause money problems not just for a cash-strapped patient but for his or her entire family. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show more than one in four U.S. families recently experienced a financial burden due to the cost of medical care.

Among Americans who participated in the National Health Interview Survey in 2012, 8.9 percent said they were currently having problems paying a medical bill and another 7.6 percent said they had been in that situation sometime in the previous 12 months. In addition, 21.4 percent of those surveyed said they were in the process of paying off a medical bill over an extended period of time.

Altogether, 26.8 percent of people reached by the interviewers said they experienced some type of financial burden due to medical bills in the previous year, according to a report released Tuesday by the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.

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