

## The Cost of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002 (Released 2006)

The results of the national Cost of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002 report were released in April, 2006. It estimates that, in 2002, abuse of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs cost Canadians about \$40 billion. The cost to BC was \$6 billion.

The study was a collaborative project led by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), with over 10 organizations with federal, provincial and territorial agencies including Health Canada and the BC Ministry of Health. The 2006 study used 2002 numbers because of the time needed to compile information from all parties involved and to complete analysis. The study began more than three years ago with an interdisciplinary team of researchers and cost about \$500,000 to complete. It fills a 10-year gap, following the release of the first comprehensive cost estimate study of substance abuse in Canada for 1992 that was also completed by the CCSA and released in 1996. The new study describes substance abuse as a significant burden on the Canadian economy in terms of both direct impact on healthcare and criminal justice costs and through its indirect toll on productivity resulting from disability and premature death.

- Overall cost for BC: \$6 billion or \$1,463 per capita
- Costs by substance:
  1. Alcohol: \$2.2 billion for BC (\$14.6 billion for Canada)
  2. Tobacco: \$2.3 billion for BC (\$17 billion for Canada)
  3. Illegal drugs: \$1.5 billion for BC (\$8.2 billion for Canada)
- BC is fourth (behind Nunavut, Northwest Territories and New Brunswick) for per-capita costs of substance abuse.

Highlights of the national cost study are available at [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca).