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## U.S. BLACK CHAMBERS, INC.

*The National Voice of Black Business*

### **Five Things to Know About the Cost of Pneumonia**

Pneumococcal disease is a serious infection that can lead to life-threatening illnesses like pneumonia. Beyond the health risks, it places a costly burden on our healthcare system, disrupts workplaces, and drives up healthcare expenses with small businesses, particularly those in our community often bearing the greatest impact.

1. Pneumococcal vaccination is **recommended for all adults 50 years or older**. Getting the pneumococcal vaccine substantially reduces an individual's chances of contracting pneumonia, leading to a healthier, more productive workforce.
2. Each year, **1.4 million people** visit the emergency department with a primary diagnosis of pneumonia, often requiring hospitalization and days of recovery. Studies show that the average cost per hospital admission is \$9,791, with a roughly **six-day length of stay**.
3. Employees who contract pneumonia may be out of work for several weeks, but **infection often disrupts job performance beyond the period of initial illness**, impacting fatigue levels and ability to perform tasks. Hospital stays, doctor visits and follow-up care can reduce efficiency while also driving up healthcare costs.
4. Studies estimate that the **total lifetime direct medical costs** associated with pneumococcal disease amount to approximately **\$45 billion**, impacting patients as well as healthcare systems and employers long after the period of infection.
5. Pneumococcal vaccination can **significantly lower the risk of severe illness**, reducing hospitalizations, the number of lost workdays, and long-term health expenditures — delivering cost savings for individuals, businesses, and the health care system.

### **How Pneumococcal Disease Affects the Black Community**

- Black communities experience significantly longer hospital stays than non-Black populations across all age groups for non-bacteremic pneumonia, as well as for those discharged alive with invasive pneumococcal disease. Additionally, hospitalization costs were notably higher for Black adults aged 65 and older facing invasive pneumococcal disease.
- Significant disparities persist between Black Americans and non-Black populations when it comes to the conditions that increase risk for pneumococcal disease, as well as in the length of hospital stays and the overall cost of care tied to this illness.

Pneumococcal vaccines are effective tools to help prevent the impact of pneumonia in the workplace and are covered with no out-of-pocket costs by employer-sponsored health plans.