



Workers Can't Afford Disability's Steep Price Tag

With two out of three U.S. families now living paycheck-to-paycheck, loss of work is a terrifying threat to the livelihood of millions of Americans. Yet nearly 30 percent of American workers will experience an accident or illness sometime that keeps them out of work at least three months – if not longer. And the number continues to increase.

Since 2000, the number of disabled workers in America has increased by 29 percent according to government statistics. At the same time, Americans are not only spending everything they earn, but they also are dipping into savings or going into debt to finance their purchases. In fact, according to a recent U.S. Commerce Department report, the overall savings rate in 2006 was a negative 1 percent – the worst since the Great Depression.

“Unfortunately, as the number of workers experiencing a disability continues to grow in tandem with a growth in overspending and debt, more American families are vulnerable to suffering serious, unexpected financial hardships,” explains Robert Taylor, president of the Council for Disability Awareness (CDA).

Given this situation, it's not surprising that disability causes nearly half of all mortgage foreclosures in the U.S., compared to only 3 percent of the foreclosures caused by death. Fortunately, by being responsible and planning ahead, American workers can improve their chances of long-term financial stability in case of a possible illness or accident. Moreover, by maintaining a healthy lifestyle, they can reduce their chances of experiencing a disability in the first place.

“It's just as important to take healthy steps to reduce the risk of disability as it is to prepare financially in case disability strikes,” reasons Taylor.

Healthy tips to lower your chances of becoming disabled include:

- Visit the doctor regularly for check-ups
- Stop smoking and avoid excessive drinking
- Get regular cancer screenings
- Watch your weight and exercise regularly
- Practice safety in all that you do
- Take care of your mental and emotional health

To learn more about tips for reducing your risk of becoming disabled, as well as tools that can help you assess your current financial situation and provide you with considerations to enhance your financial security, visit the CDA Web site, www.disabilitycanhappen.org.

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