Growing obesity epidemic will double diabetes population and triple medical costs by 2034

by Mike Adams, the Health Ranger, NaturalNews Editor

(NaturalNews) According to a study published in the December issue of *Diabetes Care*, the number of Americans with diabetes will double from 23.7 million in 2009 to 44.1 million in 2034. Consequently, the costs associated with treatment and care for diabetics will triple from $45 billion this year to $171 billion in 25 years.

Michael O'Grady, Ph.D., one of the study authors and senior fellow at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, indicated that obesity is the primary cause of the projected increase in new diabetic cases. By 2034, over 50 percent of Medicare expenses will be spent treating diabetics.

Study authors emphasized that the purpose of the study was to provide lawmakers with an avenue for assessing ways to cut treatment costs. Though obesity rates are expected to taper off in the future, the number of obese people is not expected to decrease substantially. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) prediction figures did not take this into account nor did they consider disease progression or the effects of treatments in their models, two additional areas the study aimed to capture in its model.

One factor missing from CBO models that was addressed by the study was proposed preventive health legislation. Such legislation would help to curb the dramatic increase in diabetes cases by implementing preventive treatment strategies for diabetics who are in the early stages of the disease. Though expensive initially, experts predict that the long-term savings will greatly reduce the overall financial burden of treating the disease.