

*Friday, January 23, 9:45-10:30AM  
Plenary Session*

***Economic Impact of Birth Defects***

Moderator: Scott Gross, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA

Speaker: Norman J. Waitzman, Department of Economics, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Our estimates of the societal cost of several major birth defects, now nearly a decade old, continue to be widely used in the United States and abroad in economic evaluations of ultrasonography for detection of several types of defects, of folate supplementation and fortification of foods with folic acid to prevent neural tube defects, as well as for several other purposes. Are they still valid? Using our estimates of spina bifida costs as a case example, we draw on later information on costs from various sources to make an assessment of the extent to which our adjusted cost estimates compare to more recent evidence. We demonstrate the specific type of adjustments that can and ought to be made when updating cost of illness figures, and review the circumstances under which such updated estimates are most likely to retain their validity. We finally present updated cost figures for selected congenital anomalies.