

## LIMB LOSS IN THE UNITED STATES

by the NLLIC and the Limb Loss Research and Statistics Program (LLR&SP)

Revised 2007

### INTRODUCTION

Limb loss affects a variety of people in the United States and around the world and includes people of every race, ethnicity and background without regard to geographic location, occupation or economic level. In 2007, there are approximately 2 million persons living with limb loss in the U.S. \* Datasource: Unpublished paper from Johns Hopkins.

The main cause of acquired limb loss is poor circulation in a limb due to arterial disease, with more than half of all amputations occurring among people with diabetes mellitus. Amputation of a limb may also occur after a traumatic event or for the treatment of a bone cancer. Congenital limb difference is the complete or partial absence of a limb at birth.

**Table 1.0 Persons Living with Limb Loss, 1996\***

|                  | Frequency |
|------------------|-----------|
| <b>Age Group</b> |           |
| < 18 years       | 70,000    |
| 18 - 44 years    | 293,000   |
| 45 - 64 years    | 305,000   |
| 65 - 74 years    | 395,000   |
| 75+ years        | 223,000   |
| <b>Gender</b>    |           |
| Male             | 893,000   |
| Female           | 392,000   |
| <b>Race</b>      |           |
| White            | 1,188,000 |
| Black            | 98,000    |

\*Absence of extremity, excluding fingers and toes.

DATA SOURCE: National Health Interview

Survey, Vital Statistics Report, Series 10, No. 200.

**Table 2.0 New Cases of Limb Loss, 1996**

| Cause                            | Amputations per<br>10,000 persons           |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Dysvascular Disease*</b>      | 4.6   |
| <b>Diabetes Mellitus**</b>       | 54.0  |
| <b>Trauma</b>                    | 0.6   |
| <b>Bone and Joint<br/>Cancer</b> | 0.04  |
|                                  | <b>Incidence per 10,000<br/>live births</b> |
| <b>Congenital</b>                | 2.6   |

\*Not including persons with diabetes mellitus.

\*\*Among persons diagnosed with diabetes mellitus.

DATA SOURCE: Health Care Utilization Project National Inpatient Sample (HCUP-NIS), 1996.

### INCIDENCE

There are approximately 185,000 amputation related hospital discharges each year in the U.S. The number of new cases of limb loss is greatest among persons with diabetes, with 1 out of every 185 persons diagnosed undergoing amputation of a limb. (See **table 2.0**)

Congenital limb difference occurs in 1 in 3,846 live births in the U.S., or at a rate of 2.6 per 10,000 live births. Of those, upper limb difference occurs 1.6 times more often than lower limb difference.



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### PROSTHETIC USE

Use of prosthesis or artificial limb among amputees can assist with ambulation and participation in activities of daily living. It is estimated that approximately 199,000 persons in the U.S. were using an artificial limb in 1994, with the majority using an artificial leg or foot (173,000). \* Datasource: National Center for Health Statistics, Disability Report. Table 1

### RISK FACTORS

The risk of limb loss increases with age, with persons aged 65 years or older having the greatest risk of amputation. As with diabetes and heart disease, smoking, lack of exercise and proper nutrition may also increase the risk of limb loss.