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How Health Care Costs Affect Small Town Living

By the time people feel the effects of reduced city services, it's hard to tell that medical spending is a part of the problem.



Handout Photo

If roads in your town look like this, health care cuts could be impacting your town's ability to repair roads properly.

By Susan Brink

Feb. 5, 2014

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A half century of rapidly escalating health care costs has taken a toll on every village, town and city in America, including China, Maine. The town in the far northeast corner of the country has a population of about 4,500 in the off-season, 5,500 when the fish are biting in China Lake. Town officials face the same economic challenges in maintaining roads and infrastructure and in providing education, library, recreation and emergency services as any other place in America.

Spending \$2.8 trillion on healthcare in America has ripple effects that spread far and wide. And the **town manager of China, Maine, Dan L'Heureux, who is also a member of Maine Quality Counts**, an independent healthcare collaborative focused on improving health and health care in the state, **has spent a lot of time thinking about the trade-offs in his town's budget decisions forced by rising health care costs.**