

### THE PRICE OF MYOPIA

**A**ccording to a study released this fall by the Institute, the most common chronic diseases cost the American economy over \$1 trillion annually – much of it in lost productivity. If we continue to ignore the potential of preventive measures, the bill could reach \$6 trillion by the middle of the century. Yet the news is not entirely grim because much of this cost is avoidable.



The study, “An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease,” covers seven pathologies: cancer, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, coronary artery disease, pulmonary conditions and mental illness. Institute researchers estimate that a major investment

in prevention could cut the number of cases by 40 million through 2023, reducing the net economic drag created by unnecessary morbidity by one quarter. “By investing in good health, we can add billions of dollars in economic growth in the coming decades,” concludes Ross DeVol, Director of Health Economics at the Milken Institute and principal author of the report.

The full report is available on [www.milkeninstitute.org](http://www.milkeninstitute.org). An interactive Web site with detailed data for each of the chronic diseases can be found at [www.chronicdiseaseimpact.com](http://www.chronicdiseaseimpact.com).

### LEVERAGING NORTHERN ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT

**T**he Institute has received a \$1 million grant from the Koret Foundation’s Philanthropic Fund to create an infrastructure bond program to aid in the reconstruction of the parts of Israel damaged in the war with Hezbollah.

The money was awarded to the Institute’s Israel Center, which focuses on capital-market development, financial innovation and job creation. Half of the grant will be used to establish a bond authority, while the remaining funds will be start a credit-enhancement pool for the bond issue.

### FLORIDA SCORES (AGAIN)

**F**or the third consecutive year, Florida metropolitan areas led the Milken Institute/

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

Two new publications are available at [www.milkeninstitute.org](http://www.milkeninstitute.org):

- ***“Food Surpluses and Food Insecurity.”***

Israel’s success in agricultural development has generated a big irony: growing food insecurity in an increasingly affluent nation. The Koret-Milken Institute Fellows Policy Brief explains how 15,400 tons of fruit, vegetables, and eggs were destroyed in the name of stabilizing food prices and why there are better ways to raise farm incomes.

- ***“Transatlantic Innovations in Affordable Capital for Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Prospects for Market-Based Development Finance.”***

Written in partnership with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, this report examines the role of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in economic development worldwide. SMEs, the report concludes, are primary drivers of growth. Yet they are poorly served by capital markets built around the needs of very large and very small borrowers.

Greenstreet Partners Best Performing Cities Index, taking three of the top six spots including this year’s top ranking, which goes to Ocala. But cities in other states are increasingly in the running as job-creation machines.

The top 10 performers (in order) are Ocala (Fla.), Wilmington (NC), Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario (Calif.), Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale (Ariz.), Orlando-Kissimmee (Fla.), Naples-Marco Island (Fla.), McAllen-Edinburg-Mission (Tex.), Provo-Orem (Utah), Las Vegas-Paradise (Nev.), and Raleigh-Cary (NC). The report and the rankings of the top 200 metros are available at [www.milkeninstitute.org](http://www.milkeninstitute.org).

### YUNUS MEETS MILKEN

“Poverty,” Muhammad Yunus, the winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, recently explained to an audience at the Milken Institute, “is not created by poor people. It is institutions that create poverty.” Yunus’s Grameen Bank has helped millions in his native Bangladesh by offering micro-loans – typically

amounting to a few hundred dollars – to start or expand businesses.

In a public conversation with the Institute’s chairman, Michael Milken, Yunus described how the simple idea of giving even the poorest people access to capital has invigorated Bangladesh. Today, the Grameen Bank has 2,500 branches, which serve borrowers (97 percent of whom are women) in some 79,000 villages. And to Yunus’ delight, the idea is spreading. “Two-thirds of the world’s population has no access to financial institutions,” He said. “In a world where you need a dollar to make a dollar, they never get that first dollar.”

For more about the discussion, visit [www.milkeninstitute.org](http://www.milkeninstitute.org).

### SAVE THAT DATE

The Milken Institute’s 2008 Global Conference will take place April 28-30 in Los Angeles. The GC has become an important venue for thought leaders in a wide range of disciplines. For early-bird specials, register online at [www.milkeninstitute.org/gc2008](http://www.milkeninstitute.org/gc2008).