The U.S. leads the world in health care spending, but we don't live very long, and going to the doctor is so expensive that we don't do it very often. So where is the money going?

Not toward obesity-related diseases or unnecessary tests and treatments, as the writer John Green pointed out in a recent video explainer. From Lipitor to childbirth to colonoscopies — everything just costs a whole lot.

As congressional Republicans continue to keep the federal government closed following misguided attempts to defund the most significant health care reform in decades, here are some illustrations of the wasteful spending.

Infographics by Jan Diehm for The Huffington Post.

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**The U.S. spends more on health care than other industrialized countries.**

- Per capita spending
  - (Percentage of GDP)

  - Australia: $3,800 (8.9%)
  - Canada: $4,522 (11.2%)
  - Denmark: $4,448 (10.9%)
  - France: $4,118 (11.6%)
  - Germany: $4,499 (11.9%)
  - Netherlands: $5,099 (11.9%)
  - New Zealand: $5,669 (9.3%)
  - Norway: $5,643 (11.0%)
  - Sweden: $3,925 (9.5%)
  - Switzerland: $3,405 (9.4%)
  - United Kingdom: $3,685 (9.6%)
  - United States: $8,508 (17.7%)

*Note: Data is from 2011 or nearest year. Netherlands spending measured as current expenditure. New Zealand numbers exclude investments.*

Source: OECD Health Data, 2013

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**It's not all private spending. U.S. taxpayers foot much of the bill, even though most don't get subsidized health care.**

Public expenditures on health per capita

- $2,000
- $3,000
- $4,000
- $5,000
Why U.S. Health Care Is Obscenely Expensive, In 12 Charts

![Chart 1](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/03/health-care-costs-_n_399842...)

**Health care spending has grown much faster than the rest of the economy in recent decades.**

- **Source:** McKinsey, "Accounting for the Cost of U.S. Health Care" (2011), Center for American Progress

![Chart 2](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/03/health-care-costs-_n_399842...)

**Despite high spending, Americans don’t go to the doctor very frequently.**

- **Source:** OECD Health Data 2015

![Chart 3](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/03/health-care-costs-_n_399842...)

**Hospital stays in the U.S. aren’t long but cost more than those in other countries.**

- **Source:** OECD Health Data 2015
Why U.S. Health Care Is Obscenely Expensive, In 12 Charts

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Why U.S. Health Care Is Obscenely Expensive, In 12 Charts

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/03/health-care-costs-_n_399842...
Wow! HuffPost, I have to say that I am very agreeably impressed by the above displayed charts which really say it all.

Americans stateside pay more for inferior medical services, as seen in the charts. More money per hospital stay, per surgical operation with poorer results.

To all of our friends who believe private enterprise can do it better, I see you are RIGHT! Yes, private enterprise is the answer but so is government overview in a sector ridden with GRAFT. Too many prices are just too opaque. The ACA allows people to shop and compare: what could be wrong with that?

In time, the only solution is a single payer system in which the major sector players -- medical professionals, patients and govt experts, monitor and set the prices a national healthcare fund will pay for services. If medical professionals want to pay more, but everyone will know that their peers believe that their prices are above market. Fine, that's the way we do it in France where I sometimes pay above market price for better quality service. But why pay exhorbitant prices when the quality stinks?
10 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION

Catriona
1,038 Fans
HP won't let me delete this account.
Surely you have a 'complémentaire'/mutuelle'.
3 OCT 2013 10:37 AM

The_Dude67
2,012 Fans
Authority is not the truth, truth is the authority
Do you know what amazes me? The fact that Obamacare supporters will scream until they are blue in the face about how everyone NEEDS insurance, while completely ignoring the real problem - corruption and price gouging that leads to the condition shown in this article.
If our HC was more CARE and less RACKET we would not be facing this crisis. The insurers and providers in HC realized a day of reckoning was coming. So what did they do? They got their president and congressional representatives to pass a law that will force the American public to continue to pay outrageous prices for substandard care.
Woo Hoo!! So long as the Republicans don't "win"! Fools, each of you.
3 OCT 2013 9:56 AM

Pat Vermont (VTpat)
894 Fans
And can you point to what amazing improvements have made to American healthcare by republicans? And do you really think that a Single-Payer system would have passed in a Congress controlled by big business? When the Citizens United decision was passed by the Supreme Court, there is no easy way to follow the money spent on lobbying.
3 OCT 2013 10:10 AM

Joanne Boyer (Joanne_Boyer)
SUPER USER 751 Fans
Author and Editor of Wisdom of Progressive Voices.
The ACA brings us into 19th century health care.
Single Payer -- it remains the only answer.
3 OCT 2013 8:20 AM

dogspeed
SUPER USER 396 Fans
Your mico-bio is empty.
What kind of bone will you throw the insurance companies once this happens?
3 OCT 2013 8:23 AM
Victoria M. (efffox)
SUPER USER · 10,938 Fans

You don't have a healthcare system - you have a WEALTHcare system. Single payer is the only fair system but Republicans wouldn't even allow a public option so single payer was out of the question!! Someday you'll have one because it's proven to be the best way to handle it. America always does the right thing - after they've tried everything else!!
3 OCT 2013 8:22 PM

Rander87
60 Fans

How is it fair for me to pay for your medical expenses? I don't owe you anything.
3 OCT 2013 8:27 PM

Roger W. (rascalcat)
POLITICAL PUNDIT · 5,063 Fans

Sandra Giustina is a 61-year-old uninsured American. For three years she saved her money in hopes of affording heart surgery to correct her atrial fibrillation. "They [U.S. hospitals] told me it would be about $175,000, and there was just no way could I come up with that," Giustina said.

So, with a little digging online, she found several high quality hospitals vying for her business, at a fraction of the U.S. cost. Within a month, she was on a plane from her home in Las Vegas, Nevada, to New Delhi, India. Surgeons at Max Hospital fixed her heart for "under $10,000 total, including travel."

6 million Americans will travel to another country for medical procedures because they can not afford them here. And Republicans see no problems with our current system.

3 OCT 2013 1:08 PM

Bill G. (Nothing_Profundus)
70 Fans

Republicans never said our system wasnt broken just that Obamacare is not the way to address it.
3 OCT 2013 1:14 PM
Health care is a lot like insurance. It is a scam where they receive the most money when the opportunity presents itself and spend as less as possible for the service rendered, in the end of numerous tests and six dollar band aid's the profit floats to the top management and the workers on the bottom take the hit for it. Capitalism has turned into a greedy man's game especially when the Federal Government is involved because all parties that are supposed to apply the service for seniors, and the disabled are marked as easy targets because the health care industry knows they will be paid no question asked! This country has gone selfish from the top management that pay to play lobbyist in Washington that trickles down to those politicians that allow the Plutocrats to buy them!

3 OCT 2013 8:55 AM

Russ Klettke
Russ_Klettke
SUPER USER · 342 Fans · Business and fitness writer

So .... your argument is that free market mechanisms are inappropriate for a basic human need such as healthcare. Yes?

3 OCT 2013 9:20 AM

wtf_is_this
787 Fans · It depends.

One more time... can someone explain why anyone thinks the US health care system is the best?

3 OCT 2013 9:59 PM

Rico Dagastino
Enrico_Dagastino
SUPER USER · 376 Fans · Remember the tumbrels of Paris.

Because the capitalist dream is that the more you pay the more it's worth.

3 OCT 2013 10:34 PM

RMosesNJ
332 Fans · Looking for Gallifrey.

The best chart is GDP, average salary, and health care cost. Workers produce 168% more GDP and only receive 16% increase in wages.
CLASS WARFARE IS REAL
YOU ARE LOSING

3 OCT 2013 9:08 AM

Lew F. (unclelew)
SUPER USER · 1,268 Fans

But pointing out that the 1% get all the gains is class envy, dontcha know. Now, apologize to the Koch brothers, the owners of the GOP.

3 OCT 2013 9:10 AM

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/03/health-care-costs-_n_399842...
For generations we have been oh so careful to avoid letting government have any control over our healthcare system. We have allowed the "free market" to control everything. We have a healthcare system designed by insurance companies, drug companies, medical device manufacturers, etc. We have the "best healthcare in the world" if you mean the healthcare system best designed to maximize corporate profits at every turn. Patients have no control over this market, since medical care is not a discretionary expense. Every other developed nation in the world has a public healthcare system deliberately designed to deliver healthcare to people rather than $$$ to companies. They all have better human outcomes at half the price.

Wisconsin_Progressive

33 Fans

The problem is the US healthcare industry is not a free market - prices are set by the MA/Specialty Society RVS Update Committee (RUC) - established in 1991 by law they set the prices for all healthcare procedures, costs - everything - what the Government pays and subsidizes for healthcare.

So the govt, (and your tax dollars) is buying and willing to pay for a 10 cent hamburger with $100.

Get rid of the MA/Specialty Society RVS Update Committee (RUC) - and you'll get rid of the obnoxious pricing for healthcare.

Roger W. (Brak55)

SUPER USER · 438 Fans

Single payer, NOW!

viny1

108 Fans

We would have to tax each person an average of $8500 a person to pay for the current levels of service. If we expanded coverage, it would be more.