

# Unusual respite from surging health care costs

January 7 2013, by Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

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(AP)—The government says Americans kept health care spending in check for three consecutive years.

It's an unusual respite, since health care usually surges ahead of overall [economic growth](#).

Will the relief linger? That's not clear. It could fade if jobs come roaring back as the economy recovers.

The nation's health care tab stood at \$2.7 trillion in 2011, the latest year available, nonpartisan number crunchers with the Health and Human Services Department said Monday.

That's 17.9 percent of the economy, or \$8,680 for every man, woman and child, far more than any economically advanced country spends.

Still, it was the third straight year of historically low increases.

The 3.9 percent rise meant that [health care costs](#) grew in line with the overall economy, which is considered affordable.

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