

Americans spend more on health care, but fare worse: report

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Comparison with 12 industrialized nations shows more money spent, but life expectancy is lowest.

(HealthDay)—A new global report shows that money doesn't buy everything when it comes to health care in the United States.

When compared to 12 other industrialized nations, Americans shelled out the most cash on [health care](#) services, but they fared worst in terms of [life expectancy](#), according to the Commonwealth Fund findings.

"Time and again, we see evidence that the amount of money we spend on health care in this country is not gaining us comparable health benefits," Commonwealth Fund President Dr. David Blumenthal said in a news release from the nonprofit organization.

"We have to look at the root causes of this disconnect and invest our health care dollars in ways that will allow us to live longer while enjoying

better health and greater productivity," he added.

All that said, there is one caveat: Because most of the information in the report is based on 2013 data, the results do not take into account the implementation of many of the major provisions of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

By some measures, the United States did fare relatively well. For example, the nation's cancer death rate was near the bottom of a list that includes Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

What's more, since 1995 that rate has been falling faster in the United States than in other nations.

On the other hand, when it comes to obesity rates and infant mortality, the United States did poorly compared to other nations.

The United States was pegged at spending slightly more than \$9,000 per person per year on health care. This meant that, in sum, Americans spend more than 17 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on [health care services](#).

That's roughly 50 percent more than the [health care expenditures](#) of any other country, the report noted.

The second-highest health care spender, Switzerland, spent only about \$6,300 on each of its citizens annually, the findings showed.

And while American life expectancy maxed out at just below 79, the more frugal Swiss can look forward to a life expectancy of nearly 83 years.

Although the United States was the only country on the list that doesn't have universal health care coverage, the U.S. government was nevertheless shelling out far more money on health care than other developed nations, the investigators found.

For example, while the U.S. government spent almost \$4,200 on health care per person (via Medicare and Medicaid) in 2013, the United Kingdom spent just \$2,800 per person.

And what did Americans get for all their health care bucks? Not so much, relatively speaking. While Americans tended to see their doctors about four times a year, on average, only three nations (Switzerland, New Zealand and Sweden) had lower doctor visit rates, the study found.

Still, diagnostic services (such as PET and CT scans) were far more common in the United States. Meanwhile, apart from New Zealanders, Americans were the biggest adult consumers of prescription drugs.

More information: Here's more on [The Commonwealth Fund report](#).

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