

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

February 2023-2 SPECIAL EDITION



From the Editor: Since 2004, the Commonwealth Fund has compared US healthcare to other high-income countries. Sadly, the US consistently has ranked lowest in these comparisons. This TMR Special Edition summarizes the new report's key findings along with other updates. To read the full article, click on its headline.



[U.S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022: Accelerating Spending, Worsening](#)

[Outcomes](#), by Munira Gunja, Evan Gumas, Reginald Williams II, The Commonwealth Fund, 1/31/23

TMR Topline – The Fund's 2022 review once again confirms America's outlier status – despite the highest per capita spending (see chart below), the US produces some of the worst outcomes on key health indicators.

The U.S. spends three to four times more on health care than South Korea, New Zealand, and Japan.

Dollars (USD) per capita spend on health expenditures



Notes: Data reflects all financing schemes on all functions of current expenditures on health by all providers. The OECD's largest majority of ACA marketplace plans in US to be "government/compulsory spending" because of the individual mandate, despite its repeal in 2018. See here for more information: [https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2022/01/13/health-care-spending-in-the-us-2022](#). Government/compulsory spending data: 2021 data for CAN, GER, KOR, NETH, SWE, and UK; 2020 data for AUS, FRA, JPN, NZ, SWIZ, and US. Voluntary spending data: 2021 data for CAN, GER, KOR, NETH, SWE, and UK; 2020 data for FRA, JPN, SWIZ, and US; 2019 data for AUS; 2018 data for NZ. Household out-of-pocket spending data: 2021 data for CAN, GER, KOR, NETH, SWE, UK, and US; 2020 data for FRA, JPN, and SWIZ; 2019 data for AUS; 2018 data for NZ. Data: OECD Health Statistics 2022.



Source: Munira Z. Gunja, Evan D. Gumas, and Reginald D. Williams, II. S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022: Accelerating Spending, Worsening Outcomes/Commonwealth Fund, Jan. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.26029/haopc74>

The countries reviewed include (left to right) South Korea, New Zealand, Japan, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland,

Germany and the US. The US per capita health spending (\$11,912) is 2.5 times Japan's and Japanese life expectancy (84.7 years) is 7.7 years longer than the US. At 17.8% of GDP, the US spends nearly double the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average of 9.6% of GDP.

The US has obesity rates (42.6%) that are 71% higher than the OECD average (25.0%), the highest maternal and infant mortality rates and among the highest suicide rates. Deaths from assault (including gun violence) are nearly triple the OECD average (see chart below).

Deaths from assault are highest in the U.S.

Mortality from assault, deaths per 100,000 population (standardized rates)



Notes: Rates reflect age-standardized rates. Mortality from assault rates: 2020 data for AUS, GER, KOR, NETH, UK, and US; 2019 data for CAN, JPN, and SWIZ; 2018 data for FRA; 2016 data for NZ, and NOR. OECD average reflects the average of 38 OECD member countries, including ones not shown. Information of what includes "assault" can be found here: <https://www.oecd.org/health/assault/>

Data: OECD Health Statistics 2022.



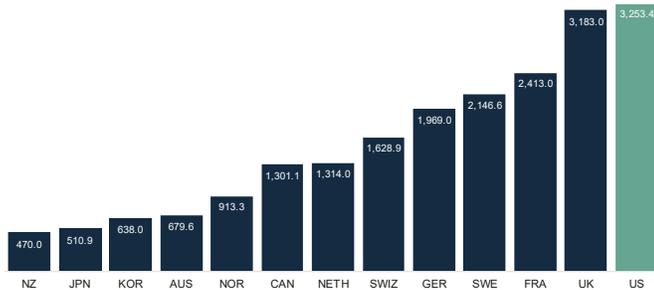
Source: Munira Z. Gunja, Evan D. Gumas, and Reginald D. Williams, II. S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022: Accelerating Spending, Worsening Outcomes/Commonwealth Fund, Jan. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.26029/haopc74>

The US also has the highest death rates for avoidable or treatable conditions. Preventable deaths can be avoided through effective public health measures and through primary prevention, such as nutritional diet and exercise. Treatable mortality can be avoided mainly through timely and effective health care interventions, including regular exams, screenings, and treatment.

Turning to the Covid-19 pandemic, the researchers found that the US has one of the lowest vaccination rates among the 13 countries (69%) and the highest death rate, 2.5 times Canada and 6 times Japan (see chart next page). On a positive note, US screening rates for breast and colorectal cancer and flu vaccination rates are among the highest in the 13 countries.

The U.S. has the highest rate of death because of COVID-19.

Deaths per 1 million because of COVID19



Notes: Rate per 1 million people who have died from COVID-19 since January 22, 2020. Available data as of January 18, 2023.

Data: [Our World in Data](#)



Source: Munira Z. Gurja, Evan D. Gumas, and Reginald D. Williams, Jr. S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022: Accelerating Spending, Worsening Outcomes/Commonwealth Fund, Jan. 2023 (<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2023/01/health-care-from-a-global-perspective>)

What do the other 12 countries have in common? They guarantee government or public health coverage to ALL their residents. The report recommends (1) Provide affordable access to care for all; (2) Contain overall healthcare costs, including administrative cost; and (3) Offer comprehensive, continuous, well-coordinated care to better prevent and manage multiple chronic conditions.

TMR's Take: The US has the world's best equipped hospitals and most thoroughly trained physicians, but continues to deliver the poorest results of the 13 high-income countries. The Commonwealth Fund's findings should be a clarion call to Congress for comprehensive healthcare reform.



[Higher Bills Are Leading Americans to Delay Medical Care](#), by Reed Abelson, New York Times, 2/16/23

TMR Topline – Inflation's rising costs are causing families to cancel tests or procedures in favor of other expenses like groceries and rent. "We are starting to see some individuals who are putting off some care, especially preventive care, due to the costs," said Dr. Tochi Iroku-Malize, the president of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Nearly 40% of Americans said they put off care in [2022 because of cost](#), the highest percentage ever reported. With significant increases projected in the prices of some treatments, prescription drugs, hospital stays, some doctors expect families to have an even harder time affording medical care. A Commonwealth Fund [report](#) found 29% of those with employer-based coverage were now underinsured given the high out-of-pocket costs. The imminent rollback of Medicaid coverage now that states will no longer have to

keep people enrolled and extra federal funds are going to disappear will likely add millions to the uninsured ranks.



[Over 35 Million Prior Authorization Requests Were Submitted to Medicare Advantage Plans in 2021](#), by Jeannie

Fuglestein Biniek and Nolan Sroczyński, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2/2/23

TMR Topline – Beneficiaries enrolled in traditional Medicare are only required to obtain prior authorization (PA) for a [limited set of services](#). Medicare Advantage (MA) plans require enrollees to obtain PA for higher cost services, such as chemotherapy or MRIs. In 2021, MA plans issued 35.2 million PA requests to 27.9 million enrollees; over 2 million (6%) were denied by the MA insurer; 11% of the denials were appealed; 82% were overturned. Last December, CMS published a [proposed rule](#) intended to improve the use of electronic PA processes, as well as the timeliness and transparency of decisions. A [second proposed rule](#) clarifies the criteria that may be used by MA plans in establishing PA policies. The authors note that little is known about the implications for enrollees, including treatment delays or differences in the criteria used in making coverage decisions.



[N.J. has very tough gun laws. Here's how it ranks in gun deaths, according to new report.](#), By Jonathan D.

Salant, Star-Ledger, 2/15/23

TMR Topline – With strict gun laws and low rates of gun ownership, New Jersey's rate of 5.13 gun deaths/100,000 people in 2021 was the [third lowest in the US](#), behind only Massachusetts and Hawaii. Mississippi is highest at 32.61/100,000 followed by Louisiana and New Mexico according to the [Violence Policy Center](#) report.

TMR's Take: First in obesity and deaths from assaults and last in infant and maternal mortality rates, US healthcare remains the disgrace of the developed world. The Allcare Plan described in "[Healing American Healthcare: A Plan to Provide Quality Care for All, While Saving \\$1 Trillion a Year](#)" reduces costs, fosters competition, improves outcomes, reduces clinical and administrative waste and lets doctors be doctors. Congress should give it serious consideration.