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“Health care around the globe”

By Andrew Seaman

(text attached)

Health care around the globe



USA TODAY's **Andrew Seaman** looks at how other developed countries provide and pay for health care compared with the U.S. system, based on the most recent information available.

United States

The U.S. health care system operates through a combination of public and private insurers. Two of the largest government-run insurance programs are Medicaid and Medicare, which are available to low-income citizens and the elderly and are largely publicly funded. Those not enrolled in government programs must find coverage through the private market, from their employer or go uninsured. Care is largely provided by private doctors at private facilities.

Germany

Germany requires people making less than about \$70,000 a year to have health insurance, which is operated by more than 200 competing, non-profit insurance companies. Those making more than \$70,000 a year have the option to be under the mandatory health care or they can buy private insurance or go uninsured. The system is funded through an income tax. Care is provided by private doctors and a mix of private and public hospitals.

Sweden

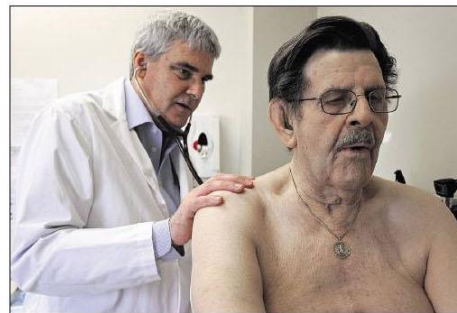
Sweden provides universal health care coverage. The program is funded through central and local taxes and co-payments on services. The national government regulates the system, but local governments organize the care facilities. Doctors can be government employees or private practitioners because the local governments can decide what system is best for their community. In most cases, hospitals are owned and operated by the local government.

Canada

Canada provides universal health care; however, many Canadians purchase insurance to supplement the government program. The program is funded through general taxation, and any supplemental insurance is paid out-of-pocket. The majority of doctors are not employed by the government. Hospitals can be either public or private, but their budgets are negotiated with the government.

Italy

Italy offers health care to all residents. Funding for the health care system comes from a mix of income taxes, local taxes and co-payments. Care is delivered through private doctors. Most hospitals are government-run. There are some private and for-profit hospitals.



By Darryl Dyck, The Canadian Press, via AP

Canadian health care: Christopher Thompson, left, examines Albert Hammill, 81, on May 14 at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. Hammill has heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and kidney problems and can get them all looked after in one visit to the hospital. Canada provides universal health care funded through taxation.

Spain

Spain provides universal health care coverage; however, a small portion of the population purchases supplemental health insurance. The funding comes from taxes and out-of-pocket payments. The national government decides the direction of the system, while local governments determine how the care is delivered. Doctors are private practitioners, and the majority of hospital beds are government-owned.

Australia

Australia provides health care to citizens, permanent legal residents and visitors from certain countries. The care is funded by an income tax and rebates to a supplemental insurance program. Care is provided by private doctors. Public hospitals provide free care, while private hospitals tend to cater to people with private insurance.

Netherlands

Everyone living or working in the Netherlands is required to purchase health insurance. Insurers are required to offer a govern-

ment-mandated standard package and provide coverage to all. The government gives subsidies to companies that take on high-risk clients with chronic illnesses and severe disabilities. Minors, the unemployed, the elderly and people who are not able to pay for insurance are covered through a government fund, which is paid for through income taxes. Care is provided through private doctors and care facilities.

United Kingdom

The U.K. offers health care to all people “ordinarily resident” in the country. Most services are free or available with a small co-payment. The main source of funding is general taxation. Doctors usually receive a salary from the government and additional payments based on the services provided. Hospitals are generally owned and operated by the government.

France

France provides health care for all living in the country – legally and illegally. The main sources of funding are payroll and income taxes; however, the government implements some cost-sharing techniques, including co-payments and extra billing. Care is provided by private doctors, even though the majority of hospitals are owned by the government.

Sources: McKinsey; The Commonwealth Fund; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Central Intelligence Agency; The Harris Poll; Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs

BY THE NUMBERS / How the U.S. compares

How the U.S. health care system stacks up against other countries' on some key financial and medical indicators:

	USA	Germany	Sweden	Canada	Italy	Spain	Australia	Netherlands	United Kingdom	France
Percentage of health expenses as a share of gross domestic product, 2007	16%	10.4%	9.1%	10.1%	8.7%	8.5%	8.7% ³	9.8% ¹	8.4%	11%
Percentage of health expenses paid with public funds, 2007	45.4%	76.9%	81.7%	70%	76.5%	71.8%	67.7% ³	62.5% ⁴	81.7%	79%
Life expectancy at birth, 2009 ¹ (in years)	78.1	79.3	80.9	81.2	80.2	80.1	81.6	79.4	79	81
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2009 ¹	6.3	4	2.8	5	5.5	4.2	4.8	4.7	4.9	3.3
Uninsured population, 2007	15.1% ²	0.2%	0%	0%	0% ³	1.7% ³	0% ³	1.4%	0%	0.1%
Percentage of people who want to completely change the health care system, 2008	33%	17%	NA	12% ²	20%	12%	18% ²	9% ²	15%	15%
Inpatient surgical procedures per 1,000 population, 2004	90	79	62	45	53	51	51	40	63	NA
Hospital bed occupancy, 2005	67%	76%	NA	90%	76%	71.6%	71%	64%	84%	75%

1-estimate; 2-2007; 3-2006; 4-2002; 5-2008

Sources: McKinsey; The Commonwealth Fund; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Central Intelligence Agency; The Harris Poll; Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs; U.S. Census

A look at how other developed countries provide and pay for health care compared with the U.S. system, based on the most recent information available:

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The U.K. offers health care to all people "ordinarily resident" in the country. Most services are free or available with a small co-payment. The main source of funding is general taxation. Doctors and hospitals are generally employed and operated by the government; however, there are private practitioners who may or may not be reimbursed by the government.

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