

Discover Wellness[®] Month

Discover Wellness Health Care Crisis Fact Sheet

Every 30 seconds in the United States someone files for bankruptcy due to a serious health problem.

Warren, E., "Sick and Broke,"
Washington Post, February 9, 2005

According to a recent study by Harvard University, researchers found that 50 percent of all bankruptcy filings in the United States were the direct result of excessive medical expenses.

Himmelstein, D., Warren E., Thorne D., Woolhandler S.,
"Illness and Injury as Contributors to Bankruptcy,"
Health Affairs web exclusive, February 2, 2005

The nation spends \$7,129 per-person on healthcare each year.

USA Today
October 16, 2006

Although nearly 46 million Americans are uninsured, the United States spends more on health care than other industrialized nations, and those countries provide health insurance to all their citizens.

California Health Care Foundation,
Health Care Costs 101- 2005, March 2, 2005

In fact, most people are shocked to find out that Starbucks Coffee spends more money on health care costs than they do on coffee, and General Motors spends more on health care costs than they do on steel!

Herrick D.,
"Why Employee – Based Health Insurance is Unraveling,"
National Center for Policy Analysis, November 1, 2005

That means that \$15 of every \$100 of our economy goes toward covering the cost of being sick in this country. According to the National Coalition on Health Care, the U.S. health care spending is expected to increase at similar levels for the next decade, reaching \$4 trillion in 2015, or 20 percent of GDP!

Borger, C., et al.,
"Health Spending Projections Through 2015: Changes on the Horizon,"
Health Affairs Web Exclusive W61: 22, February 2006

We all pay for these costs in the form of increased taxes and increased cost for all of the stuff that we buy on a daily basis. Consider this. Every time you spend:

- *\$10 for a movie ticket approximately \$1.50 goes to cover medical costs.*
- *\$50 for a tank of gas approximately \$7.50 goes to cover medical costs*
- *\$250 for an airline ticket approximately \$37.50 goes to cover medical costs.*
- *\$1000 on auto repairs approximately \$150 goes to cover medical costs.*
- *\$2500 on a plasma television approximately \$375 goes to cover medical costs.*
- *\$25,000 on a new car approximately \$1666 goes to cover medical costs.*

Discover Wellness: How Staying Healthy Can Make You Rich
Hoffman & Deitch Center Path Publishing 2007

- *Preventable illness makes up 70% of the burden of illness and its associated expenses.*

The New England Journal of Medicine

- *Over 95% of our nations expenditures are committed to diagnosing and treating disease only after it becomes manifested.*

Partnership for Prevention

- *America marks up 4% of the world's population and spends 50% of all the money on medical care worldwide.*

World Health Organization

- *The United States is currently ranked 37th in the world health.*

World Health Organization

In a recent article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Dr. Barbara Starfield of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health listed the negative health effects of the U.S. health care system itself including:

- *12,000 deaths per year from unnecessary surgery*
- *7,000 deaths per year from medication errors*
- *20,000 deaths per year from other errors in hospitals*
- *116 million unnecessary physician visits*
- *77 million unnecessary prescriptions*
- *17 million unnecessary emergency department visits*
- *8 million hospitalizations*
- *3 million long-term admissions*
- *199,000 unnecessary deaths*
- *\$77 billion in unnecessary costs*

"Medicine is a high hazard industry like aviation. The Chance of dying in an aviation accident is 1 in 2 million while the risk of dying from a medical accident is 1 in 200."

Dr. Lucian Leape
Harvard

"We're all one serious illness away from bankruptcy."

Carol Pryor, a senior policy analyst at The Access Project in Boston who has studied the issue of medical debt and its "ripple effect" on people's lives

Drug expenditures have been the fastest growing segment of health care spending in this country, rising by more than 15 percent every year since 1998.

National Center for Health Statistics, United States, 2005,
With Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans
Hyattsville, Maryland: 2005

According to the Journal of The American Medical Association, approximately 2.2 million people are hospitalized because of adverse drug reactions + 140,000 die each year.