

United States \$7,290

HEALTH

The Cost of Care

The United States spends more on medical care per person than any country, yet life expectancy is shorter than in most other developed nations and many developing ones. Lack of health insurance is a factor in life span and contributes to an estimated 45,000 deaths a year. Why the high cost? The U.S. has a fee-for-service system—paying medical providers piecemeal for appointments, surgery, and the like. That can lead to unneeded treatment that doesn't reliably improve a patient's health. Says Gerard Anderson, a professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health who studies health insurance worldwide, "More care does not necessarily mean better care." —Michelle Andrews

