

Why U.S. Health Care Is Obscenely Expensive, In 12 Charts

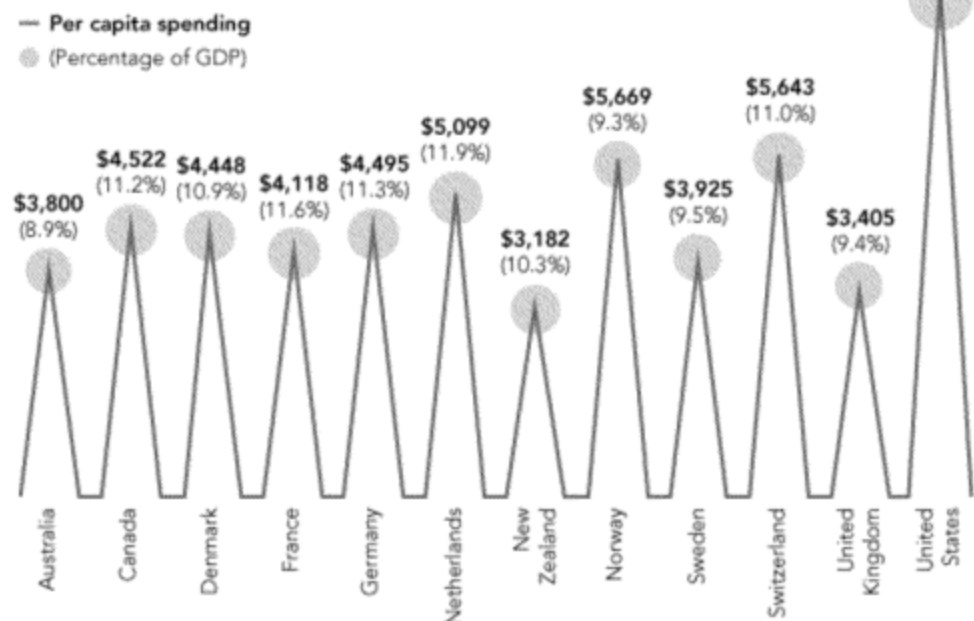
Katy Hall & Jan Diehm: 10/03/2013

The U.S. leads the world in health care spending, but we don't live very long, and going to the doctor is so expensive that we don't do it very often. So where is the money going?

Not toward obesity-related diseases or unnecessary tests and treatments, as the writer John Green pointed out in a recent video explainer. From Lipitor to childbirth to colonoscopies -- *everything* just costs a whole lot.

As congressional Republicans continue to keep the federal government closed following misguided attempts to defund the most significant health care reform in decades, here are some illustrations of the wasteful spending.

The U.S. spends more on health care than other industrialized countries.

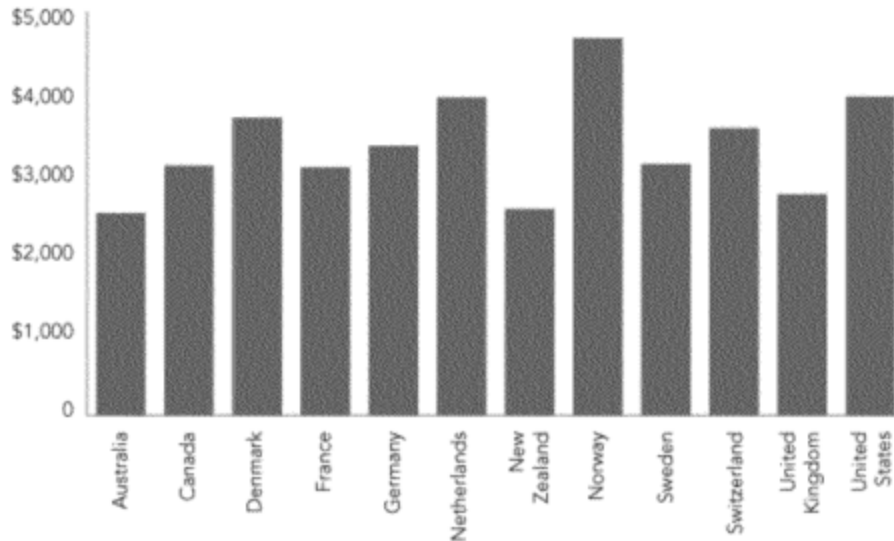


Notes: Data is from 2011 or nearest year. Netherlands spending measured as current expenditure. New Zealand numbers exclude investments.
Source: OECD Health Data 2013

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It's not all private spending. U.S. taxpayers foot much of the bill, even though most don't get subsidized health care.

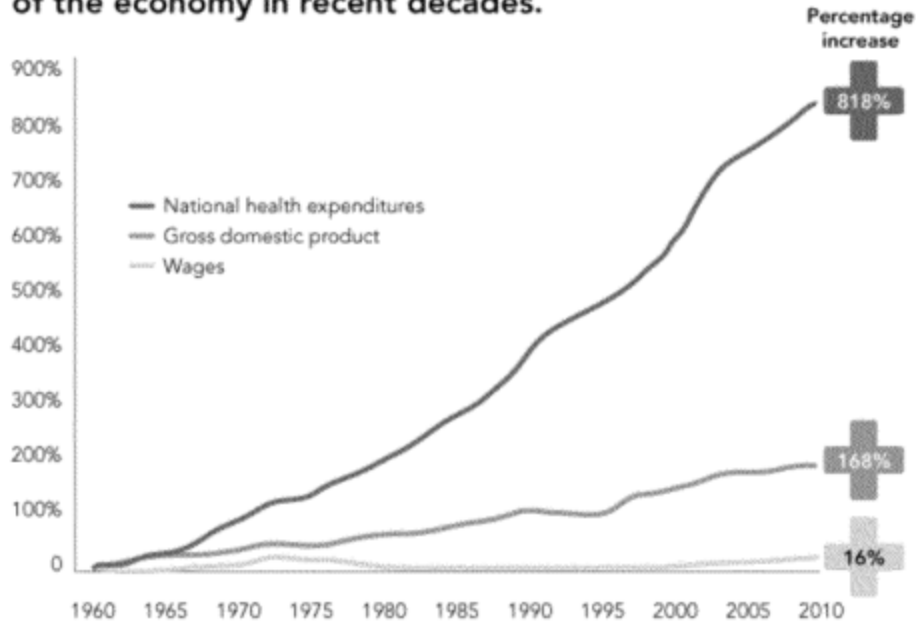
Public expenditures on health per capita



Notes: Data is from 2011 or nearest year. Netherlands spending measured as current expenditure. New Zealand numbers exclude investments.
Source: OECD Health Data 2013

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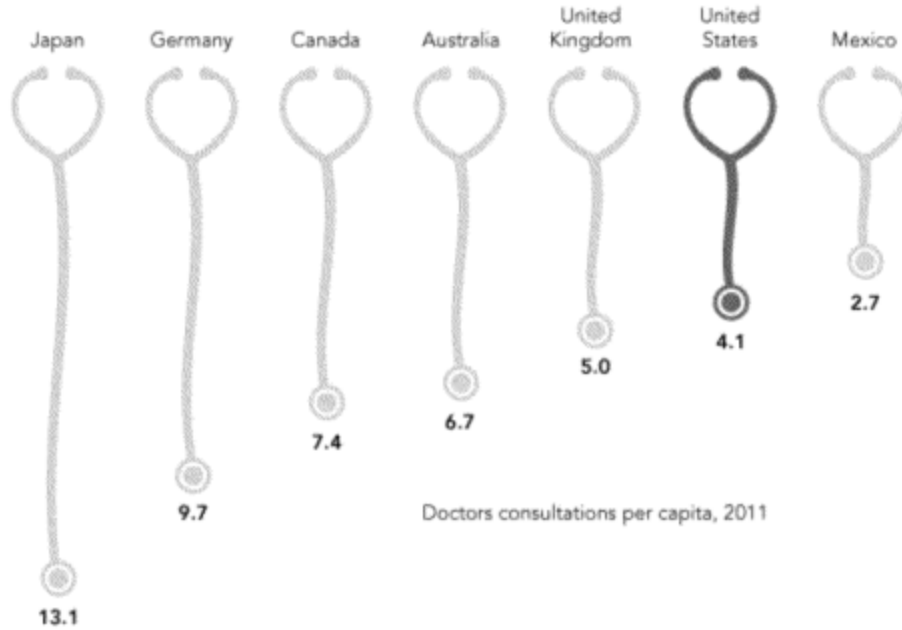
Health care spending has grown much faster than the rest of the economy in recent decades.



Sources: McKinsey, "Accounting for the Cost of U.S. Health Care" (2011), Center for American Progress

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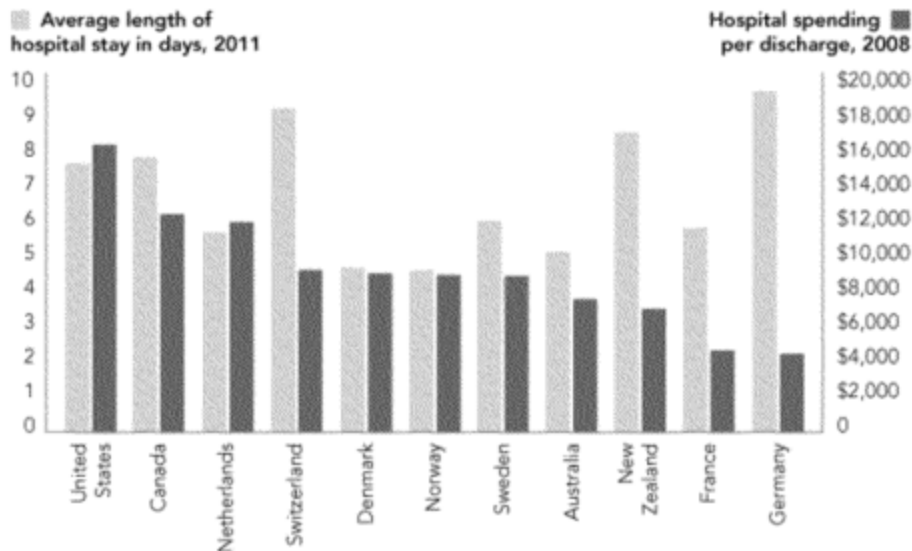
Despite high spending, Americans don't go to the doctor very frequently.



Notes: Data is from 2011 or nearest year.
Source: OECD Health Data 2013

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Hospital stays in the U.S. aren't long but cost more than those in other countries.

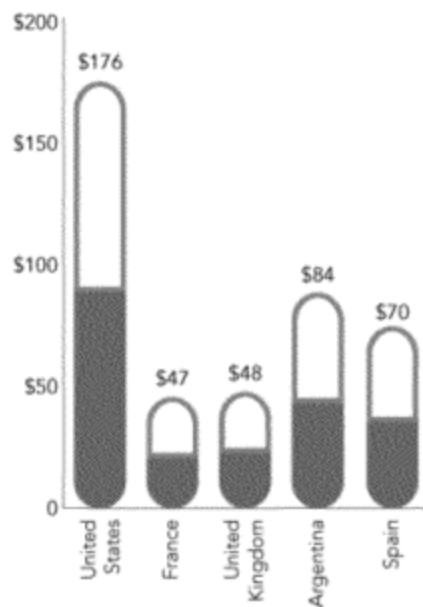


Notes: Acute care is curative care generally provided in a hospital (as opposed to long-term care, which is generally provided in a nursing home). Data is from 2008 and 2011 or nearest year.
Sources: OECD Health Data 2010, OECD Health Data 2013, Congressional Research Service, The Commonwealth Fund

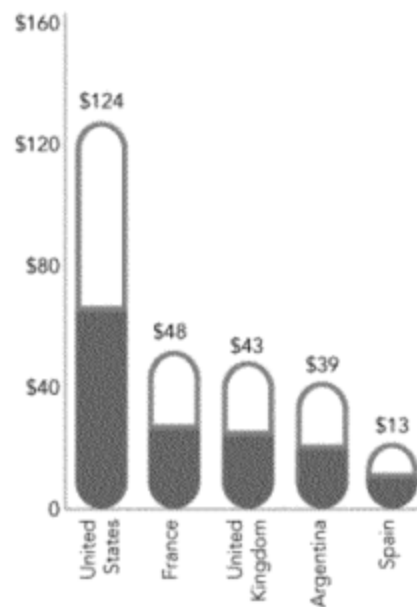
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Commonly prescribed drugs are very expensive in the U.S.

Cymbalta costs 2012



Lipitor costs 2012

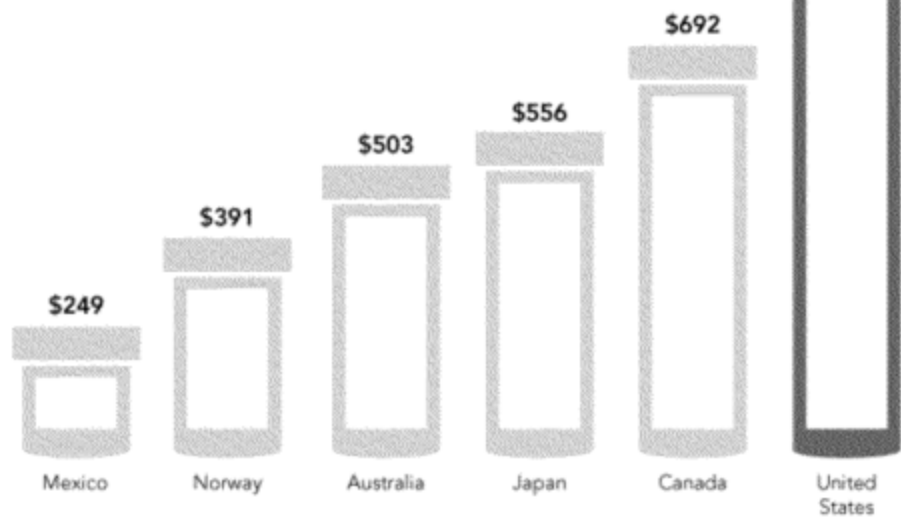


Source: International Federation of Health Plans, 2012

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So it's not surprising how much the average American's prescriptions cost.

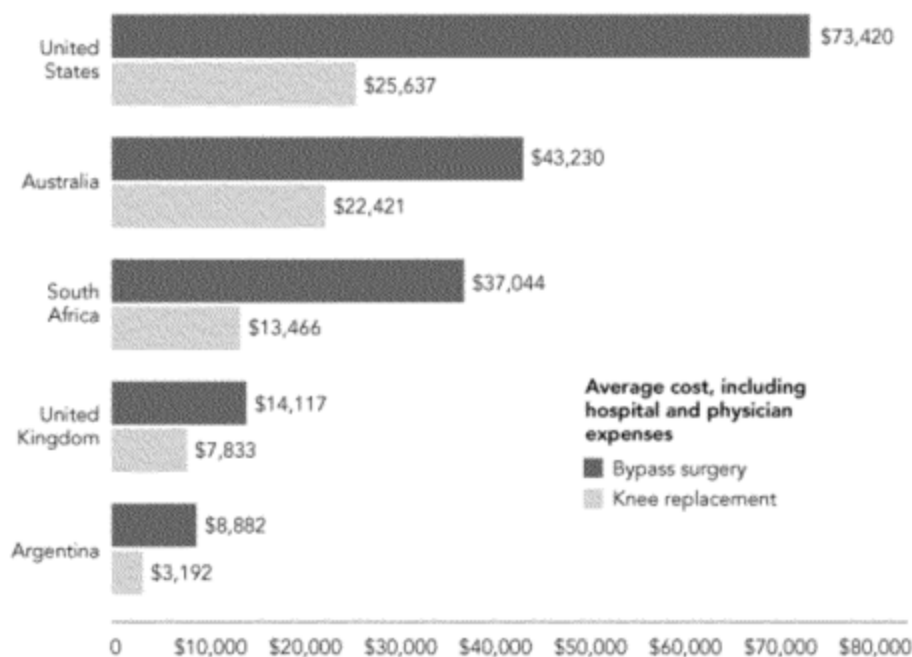
Prescription spending per capita, 2011



Notes: Numbers from Mexico and Norway cannot be separated and include medical non-durables. Data is from 2011 or nearest year.
Source: OECD Health Data 2011

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Surgery is also pricey.

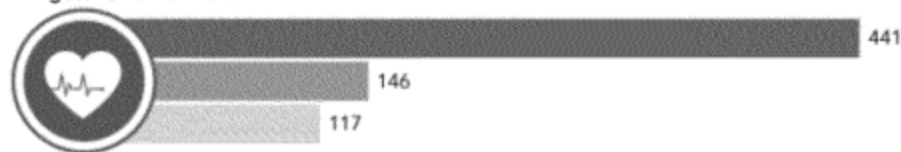


Source: International Federation of Health Plans, 2010

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And hospital visits for chronic conditions are common.

Congestive heart failure



Asthma



Diabetes acute complications



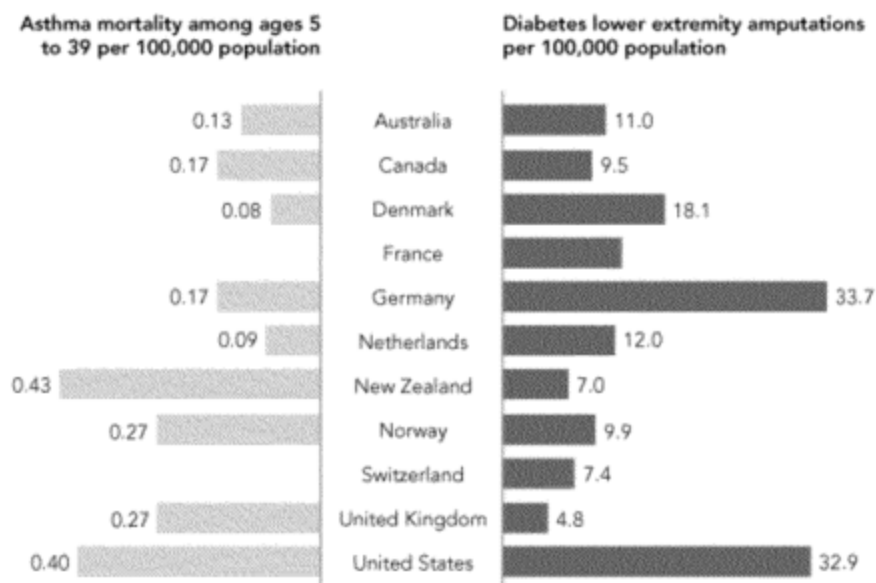
Hospital admissions per 100,000 people age 15 and older, 2007

- United States
- Canada
- United Kingdom

Notest: United States does not fully exclude day cases.
Data is from 2007 or nearest year.
Source: OECD Health Care Quality Indicators Data 2009,
The Commonwealth Fund

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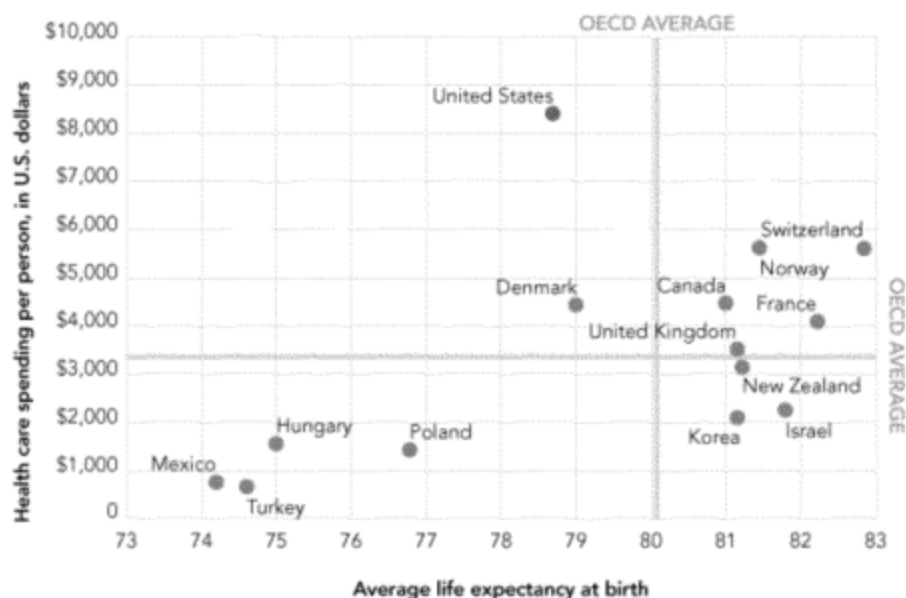
Despite high rates of hospitalization for chronic conditions, outcomes in the U.S. aren't good.



Notes: Rates are age-sex standardized. Data is from 2008 or nearest year.
Sources: OECD Health Data 2011, The Commonwealth Fund

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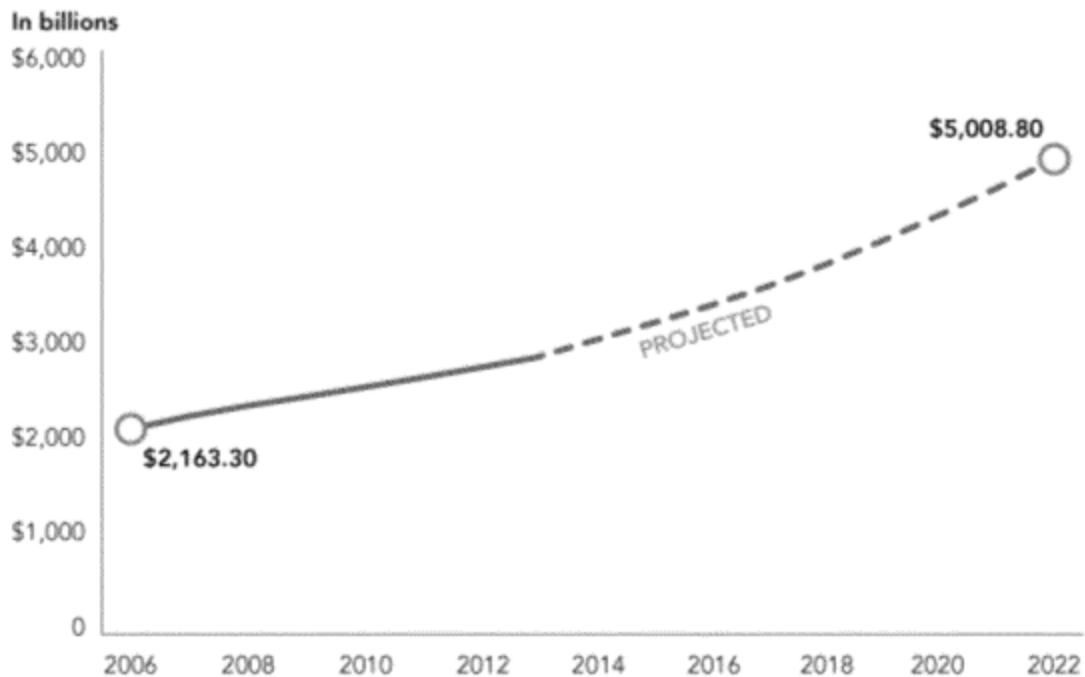
Americans don't live longer than people in countries that spend much less on health care.



Notes: Data is from 2011 or nearest year. New Zealand numbers exclude investments. Not all OECD countries are included.
Source: OECD Health Data 2013

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Health care spending is projected to nearly double in the next decade.



Notes: The health spending projections were based on the National Health Expenditures released in January 2013. The projections include impacts from the Affordable Care Act. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.
Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Office of the Actuary

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Infographics by Jan Diehm for The Huffington Post.