

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health\\_care](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_care)

**Health care** or **healthcare** is the maintenance or improvement of [health](#) via the [diagnosis](#), [treatment](#), and [prevention](#) of [disease](#), [illness](#), [injury](#), and other [physical and mental impairments](#) in human beings. Healthcare is delivered by [health professionals](#) (providers or practitioners) in [allied health professions](#), [chiropractic](#), [physicians](#), physician associates, [dentistry](#), [midwifery](#), [nursing](#), [medicine](#), [optometry](#), [pharmacy](#), [psychology](#), and other [health professions](#)

. It includes the work done in providing  
[primary care](#)  
,  
[secondary care](#)  
, and  
[tertiary care](#)  
, as well as in  
[public health](#)  
.

Access to health care may vary across countries, groups, and individuals, largely influenced by social and economic conditions as well as the [health policies](#) in place. Countries and jurisdictions have different policies and plans in relation to the personal and population-based health care goals within their societies.

[Healthcare systems](#)  
are organisations established to meet the health needs of target populations. Their exact configuration varies between national and subnational entities. In some countries and jurisdictions, health care planning is distributed among market participants, whereas in others, planning occurs more centrally among governments or other coordinating bodies. In all cases, according to the  
[World Health Organization](#)  
(WHO), a well-functioning healthcare system requires a robust financing mechanism; a well-trained and adequately paid  
[workforce](#)  
; reliable information on which to base decisions and  
[policies](#)  
; and well maintained  
[health facilities](#)  
and logistics to deliver quality medicines and technologies.  
<sup>[1]</sup>

Healthcare can contribute to a significant part of a country's [economy](#) . In 2011, the [healthcare industry](#)  
consumed an average of 9.3 percent of the  
[GDP](#)  
or  
[US\\$](#)  
3,322 ( [PPP-adjusted](#)  
) per capita across the 34 members of  
[OECD](#)  
countries. The US (17.7%, or US\$ PPP 8,508), the

[Netherlands](#)

(11.9%, 5,099),

[France](#)

(11.6%, 4,118),

[Germany](#)

(11.3%, 4,495),

[Canada](#)

(11.2%, 5669), and

[Switzerland](#)

(11%, 5,634) were the top spenders, however

[life expectancy in total population at birth](#)

was highest in Switzerland (82.8 years),

[Japan](#)

and

[Italy](#)

(82.7),

[Spain](#)

and

[Iceland](#)

(82.4), France (82.2) and

[Australia](#)

(82.0), while OECD's average exceeds 80 years for the first time ever in 2011: 80.1 years, a gain of 10 years since 1970. The US (78.7 years) ranges only on place 26 among the 34 OECD member countries, but has the highest costs by far. All OECD countries have achieved universal (or almost universal) health coverage, except the US and

[Mexico](#)

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[\[2\]](#)

[\[3\]](#)

(see also

[international comparisons](#)

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Health care is conventionally regarded as an important determinant in promoting the general physical and mental [health](#) and [well-being](#) of people around the world. An example of this was the worldwide eradication of [smallpox](#) in 1980, declared by the WHO as the first disease in human history to be completely eliminated by deliberate health care interventions.

[\[4\]](#)

