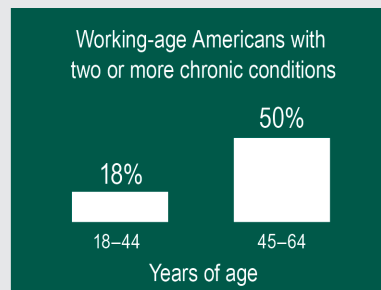
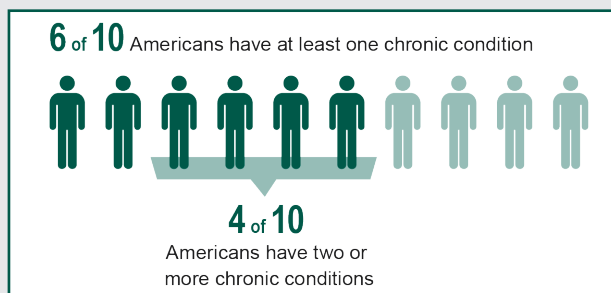
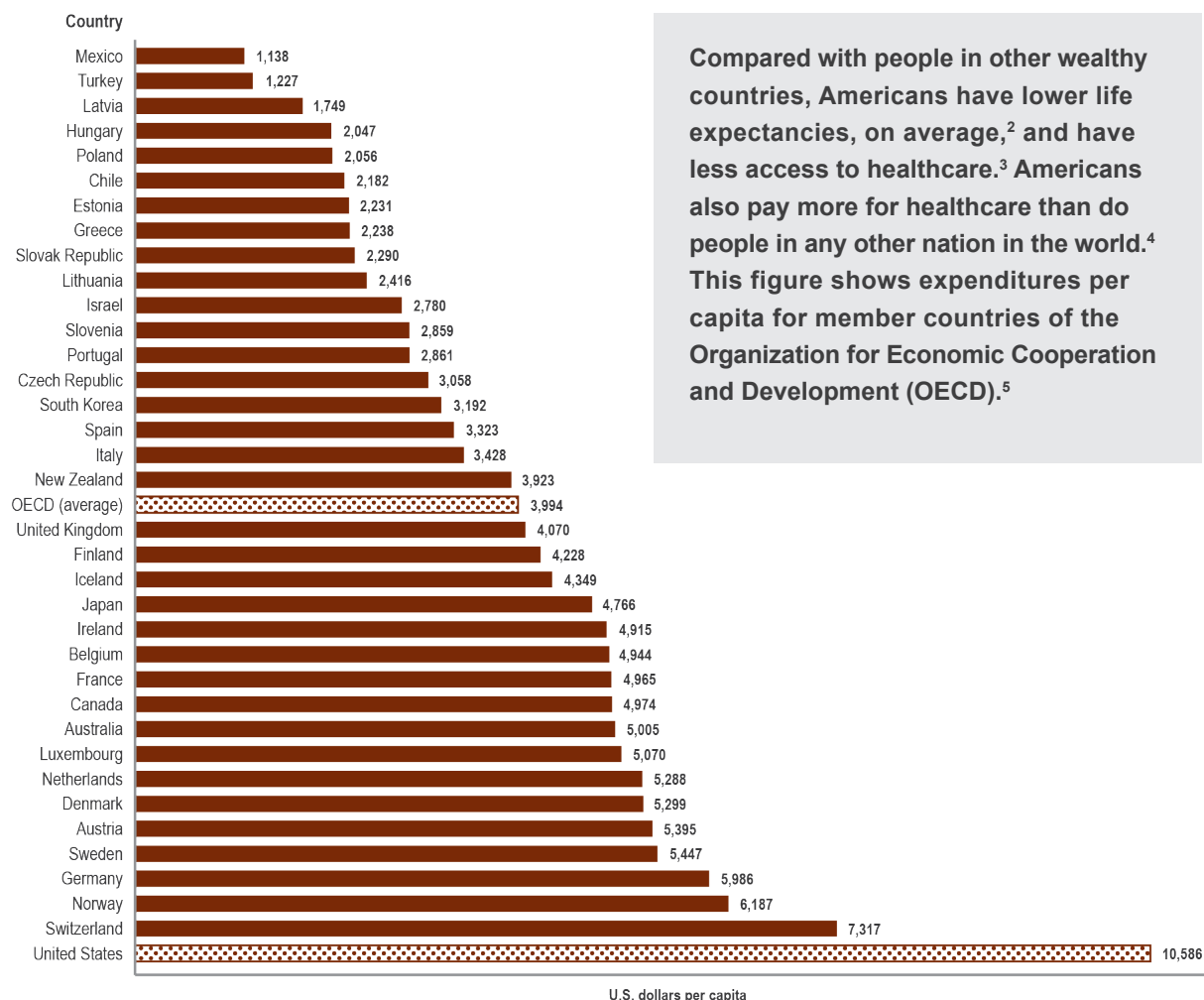


# What Is the U.S. Health Disadvantage?

The health of Americans is not as good as it could be and is worse than the health of people in other wealthy countries.<sup>1</sup>

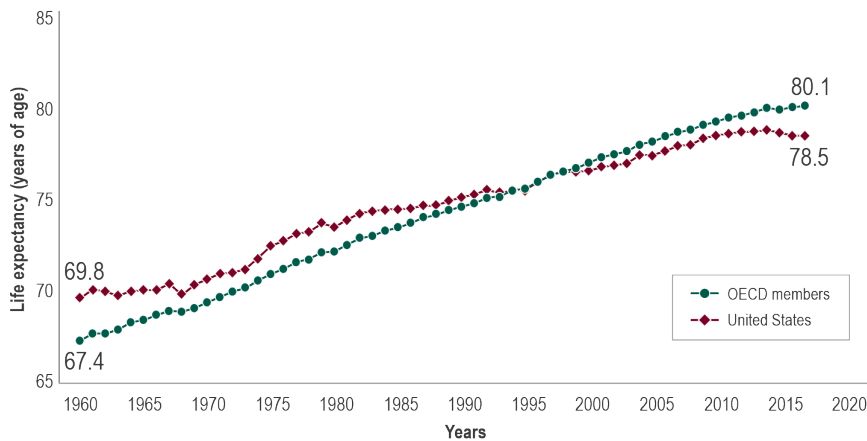


Health expenditure per capita, 2018 (or nearest year), by country and the OECD average



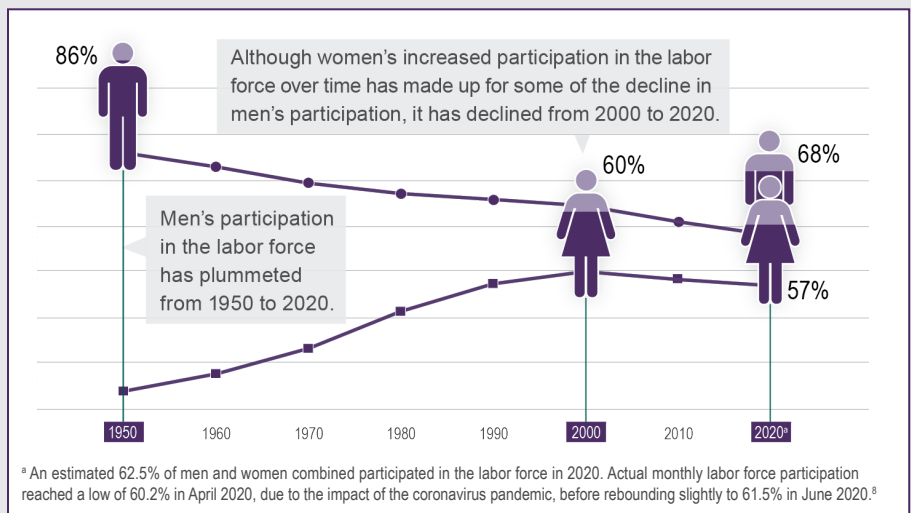
Compared with people in other wealthy countries, Americans have lower life expectancies, on average,<sup>2</sup> and have less access to healthcare.<sup>3</sup> Americans also pay more for healthcare than do people in any other nation in the world.<sup>4</sup> This figure shows expenditures per capita for member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>5</sup>

Life expectancy at birth in the United States and member countries of OECD, 1960–2017<sup>6</sup>



The U.S. health disadvantage—poorer health (i.e., shorter lives and more illness) and higher costs for and less access to healthcare—is a burden to U.S. individuals, families, and businesses and to the U.S. economy.<sup>7</sup>

With more Americans in poor health, fewer Americans working, and the whole country burdened by high and growing healthcare costs, the United States is less able to compete in the global economy and sustain opportunities for Americans to achieve their best health, wealth, and well-being. Quality of life suffers for all Americans as potential remains unrealized for too many.



## Notes

- 1 Data in graphic from Buttorff, C., Ruder, T., & Bauman, M. (2017). *Multiple chronic conditions in the United States*. Retrieved from [http://www.fightchronicdisease.org/sites/default/files/TL221\\_final.pdf](http://www.fightchronicdisease.org/sites/default/files/TL221_final.pdf)
- 2 Murphy, S. L., Xu, J. Q., Kochanek, K. D., & Arias, E. (2018). *Mortality in the United States, 2017*. NCHS Data Brief, 328, 1–8.
- 3 Dickman, S. L., Himmelstein, D. U., & Woolhandler, S. (2017). Inequality and the health-care system in the U.S.A. *Lancet*, 389(10077), 1431–1441; and Mossialos, E., Djordjevic, A., Osborn, R., & Sarnak, D. (Eds.). (2017). *International profiles of health care systems*. New York, NY: The Commonwealth Fund.
- 4 Papanicolas, I., Woskie, L. R., & Jha, A. K. (2018). Health care spending in the United States and other high-income countries. *JAMA*, 319(10), 1024–1039.
- 5 Graphic adapted from page 151 of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Health at a glance 2019: OECD indicators*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1787/4dd50c09-en>
- 6 Data obtained from The World Bank. (n.d.). Life expectancy at birth, total (years). Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sp.dyn.le00.in>
- 7 Data in graphic from Table 4 in Toossi, M. (2002). A century of change: the U.S. labor force, 1950–2050. *Monthly Labor Review*, 15–28; and Table 3 in Toossi, M. (2012). Employment outlook: 2010–2020. Labor force projection to 2020: a more slowly growing workforce. *Monthly Labor Review*, 43–64.
- 8 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020, July 2). *Charting the labor market: Data from the Current Population Survey (CPS)*. Retrieved from [https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cps\\_charts.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cps_charts.pdf)

**ABOUT THIS FACT SHEET** | The content of this fact sheet is adapted from *Community Health and Economic Prosperity: Engaging Businesses as Stewards and Stakeholders—A Report of the Surgeon General*.



The complete Surgeon General's report describes the U.S. health disadvantage and the importance of strengthening communities and improving the health of residents. It also offers recommendations for how businesses can address the U.S. health disadvantage by engaging with and investing in communities, while creating value, lowering business costs, and improving the health of employees and other stakeholders.

For more content—including supporting references and additional resources—view the complete report, business digest, fact sheets, and other supplementary materials at <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/>



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