

Health Care

1) What is the corrected cost of the Medicare bill which Bush signed in December 2003?

President Bush last year signed a Medicare prescription drug benefit with an estimated price tag of \$395 billion. A month later, the White House said the actual cost was more like \$534 billion.

Source: Bush Team's Fuzzy Math, Jarrett Murphy, CBS News, Feb. 24, 2004
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/02/24/politics/main601960.shtml>

2) What was the average cost for each American to have health care during 2002?

About \$5,440. For 2001, this country spent 47% more per person than Switzerland, the second biggest spender per capita. Health care spending in the US surged to \$1.6 trillion in 2002 and outpaced growth in the rest of the economy.

Source: "U.S. Health Care Spending Surges Again," Mark Sherman, Associated Press, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Jan. 8, 2004, http://www.ajc.com/health/content/shared/health/ap/ap_story.html/Health/AP.V0341.AP-Health-Care-Spe.html

3) How many adults are estimated to die each year in the US because they don't have health insurance?

18,000. The Institute of Medicine, an independent, nonprofit group that advises Congress and the federal government on health matters, said taxpayers are paying for 43 million uninsured Americans anyway — and footing a much bigger bill than they would if those people had decent health care.

Source: "U.S. Advisers Call for Universal Health Care," Maggie Fox, Reuters, *Wired News*, Jan. 14, 2004, http://wireservice.wired.com/wired/story.asp?section=Breaking&storyId=813915&tw=wn_wire_story

4) How many Americans were uninsured for a month or more in either 2001 or 2002?

72 million, or 30% of all Americans under the age of 65.

Source: http://www.fightforthefuture.org/bushrecord/bush_healthcare.cfm

5) How many people in the United States had no health coverage for the entire year of 2002?

43.6 million, or 15.2% of the US population. This figure has seen a 9% increase over the past two years.

Source: US Census document "Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2002," <http://www.census.gov/hhes/hlthins/hlthin02/hi02t1.pdf>

6) What percentage of adults, ages 18-64, lacked health coverage for the entire year of 2002?

19.5%, up from 17.8% in 2000.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau documents "People Without Health Insurance for the Entire Year by Selected Characteristics: 2001 and 2002" and "People Without Health Insurance for the Entire Year by Selected Characteristics: 2000 and 2001," <http://www.census.gov/hhes/hlthins/hlthin02/hi02t1.pdf> and <http://www.census.gov/hhes/hlthins/hlthin01/hi01t1.html>

7) Patented drugs cost how much more in the US than in Canada?

1.69 times as much, on average, to more than 3 times as much for some drugs.

Source: "Drug Pricing: A Comparison between Canada and Other Countries," published by Canada's Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, <http://www.pmprb-cepmb.gc.ca/CMFiles/sp02-irpp-e14NLB-482003-8592.pdf> (see page 9).

Specific examples, expressed in US dollars:

Mirapex (for Parkinson's) — costs \$157 in Canada and \$263 in the US (168%).

Seroquel (for insomnia) — costs \$33 in Canada and \$124 in the US (376%).

Source: ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, "Health, Critical Condition," Wed. 22-Oct-2003.

8) Currently Medicare is prevented from negotiating for better prices on drugs with the US pharmaceutical industry, while neighboring Canada and Mexico *can* negotiate prices. Do you think Medicare should be able to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for better pricing?

Section 1860D-11(i)(2) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 prevents this type of negotiating with the pharmaceutical industry, thus protecting the industry's profits.

Ref.: Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Enrolled as Agreed to or Passed by Both House and Senate)[H.R.1.ENR], <http://thomas.loc.gov>

9) Why do Americans pay so much more for prescriptions than citizens of other industrialized countries do?

The US is the only industrialized country without price controls on drugs. Canada, for example, has a Medical Prices Review Board which controls prices for citizens as follows:

- Existing drugs prices may rise no faster than inflation.
- New drugs may not cost more than similar drugs for the same illness.
- A breakthrough drug may not cost more than its median price among other countries.

Source: ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, "Health, Critical Condition," Wed. 22-Oct-2003.

10) Have price controls in Canada limited Canadians' access to drugs?

No, there are only 6 drugs and 3 contraceptives sold in the US that are not sold in Canada.

Source: ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, "Health, Critical Condition," Wed. 22-Oct-2003.

11) How much more do Americans pay for health care per person than do the citizens of the next highest spending nation?

For 2001, this country spent 47 percent more per person than Switzerland, the second biggest spender per capita, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In 2002, health care spending in the United States surged to \$1.6 trillion — about \$5,440 for every American — and outpaced growth in the rest of the economy for a fourth straight year.

Source: "U.S. Health Care Spending Surges Again," Mark Sherman, Associated Press writer, Jan. 8, 2004, http://abcnews.go.com/wire/Living/ap20040108_1578.html

12) How many administrators are there in the US health care industry compared to the number of doctors and nurses?

In 2001 administrators outnumbered doctors and nurses combined by 300,000.

Source: ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, "Health, Critical Condition," Tues. 21-Oct-2003.

13) What's the Bush Administration's policy on limiting world population?

They withdrew \$34 million to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in July 2002.

Source: The United Nations Population Fund, "Statement on U.S. Funding Decision," 22 July 2002, <http://www.unfpa.org/news/news.cfm?ID=146&Language=1>

14) What happens when funding to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) gets cut?

UNFPA officials estimated that the loss (in July 2002) of the United States contribution of \$34 million, representing fully 13% of UNFPA's budget, could result in 2 million additional unwanted pregnancies, 4700 maternal deaths, 60,000 cases of serious maternal injury and illness, 77,000 infant deaths, and 800,000 abortions.

Sources: The Library of Congress, House Resolution 1196 in the year 2003, <http://thomas.loc.gov/> [type HR1196 in "Bill Number" field]

United Nations Population Fund, <http://www.unfpa.org/news/news.cfm?ID=146&Language=1>

15) What did Republican William Milliken, the longest-serving governor of Michigan, have to say about this Bush administration policy in August 2003?

“The right wing is seeking to impose an entire set of doctrinaire beliefs that will sharply restrict health care for women and, as a result, actually increase the number of abortions worldwide.

“We know that the lack of access to basic family planning services and information undermines a woman’s ability to determine her own destiny. It also increases illness and mortality rates of women and their children, and inhibits the ability of families to climb out of poverty.

“The GOP is allowing itself to become identified with an agenda on family planning that threatens to reverse the decades of progress in empowering women in the United States and abroad.”

Source: Detroit Free Press, Aug. 10, 2003, http://www.freep.com/voices/columnists/emil10_20030810.htm