

# ***HEALTH CARE***

## ***NEWS AND INFORMATION***

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Volume 14 Number 23

July 13, 2007

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*Health Care: News and Information* is a service of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) to help our readers stay fully informed about the latest health care issues as we work to advance a high-quality health care system.

Jim Edwards, Editor

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## **Honest Comparisons Show American Health Care Better Than Socialized Systems**

**Hollywood filmmaker Michael Moore may think the grass is greener overseas when health care is concerned. But an honest look at the facts shows just the opposite.**

- The fact is, in the most important ways, American health care outperforms government-run health systems around the world.
- Moore's movie, *Sicko*, has been criticized for cherry picking the "facts" cited to make its case, including in an op-ed in the *Baltimore Sun* and on CNN. The film is critical of U.S. health care; its real purpose is to advance government-run health care.
- One of Moore's more outlandish assertions claims that Cuba's communist health care beats America's market-based health care.

### **How does the U.S. really compare with foreign, government-run health care?**

- What about Stage I colon cancer? Ninety percent of Americans survive this cancer, compared with a 70 percent survival rate in Great Britain.
- Among Stage I breast cancer patients, 97 percent of American women are alive five years after diagnosis. Only 78 percent of British patients survive that long.
- American cancer deaths have fallen 1 percent every year, when adjusted for age, since 1991.
- The British government-run health system has 1 million patients on waiting lists holding out for the care they need. Some 800,000 Canadians are relegated to waiting lists for medical procedures. Waits for surgeries and other treatments typically number in months, a year or longer. Some patients on waiting lists die from their untreated condition.
- As is typical, the British government-run system denies patients access to the newest health care, such as two of the latest kidney cancer drugs. The driving factor? Bureaucratic cost decisions.

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- From 1997 to 1999, 100 new medicines entered the U.S. market. In Canada, only 43 new

medicines became available. The reason? Government bureaucrats barred the life-saving medicines from the Canadian system. This penny-pinching denied patients access to innovation that Americans were already enjoying.

**Health care analyst Grace-Marie Turner wrote in the Baltimore Sun, "The data show that if you are sick, the United States is where you want to be. We spend more in this country on health care, and we get more medical care as a result." No rational person would prefer to seek medical care where patients face long waits, rationing and shortages. Despite recent propaganda efforts, it's fair to say that overall, American health care delivers greater value precisely because of its market-based design. Consumer choice and competition provide higher quality, contain costs and drive innovation. That's the American way – in health care and elsewhere. Sure, there's room for improvement, but overall, we're ahead of the rest of the world.**

*The Healthcare Leadership Council, representing the innovators in each sector of the health care industry, is committed to advancing a market-based health care system that values innovation and provides affordable, high-quality care.*

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