

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: National Insurance Services

U.S. Has Lowest Life Expectancy Among Comparable Countries While Far Outspending Them on Health Care

The United States experienced the second year of decline in life expectancy in 2021, while other comparably large, wealthy countries saw a rebound in life expectancy since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new [Health System Tracker](#) analysis from the Peterson Center on Healthcare and Kaiser Family Foundation (Peterson-KFF). The analysis revealed that in addition to having the lowest life expectancy among comparable countries, the United States outspends its peers by nearly double on health care.



In 2021, the U.S. life expectancy was 76.1 years, while comparable countries averaged 82.4 years. The nation also spent more than \$4,000 per capita on health care than the next highest-spending country.



In 1980, life expectancy at birth in the United States and comparably large and wealthy countries was similar. However, life expectancy over recent decades has improved much more in peer nations than in the United States. The Peterson-KFF analysis noted that COVID-19 had increased U.S. mortality and premature death rates more than in comparable countries, widening a gap that existed before the pandemic.

While the United States has the lowest life expectancy among comparable countries, it far outspends them on health care. Per capita health care spending in the United States was \$12,318 in 2021; comparable countries averaged \$6,003 in spending.

What's Next?

Health care costs in the United States have risen sharply over the past two decades and will likely continue to increase. Unfortunately, higher health care spending hasn't translated into longer lifespans for Americans.

Many employers are responding to skyrocketing health care costs amid a looming recession by altering benefits offerings and encouraging preventive care services. Employers should continue to monitor health care trends, utilization and spending. Contact National Insurance Services for more health care resources.

