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Study indicates money can't buy you longevity

America's rising spending on health care does not translate into high life-expectancy numbers.

BY ERIK HOGSTROM TH STAFF WRITER

America's rising health care spending has not resulted in better health outcomes. That's the finding of the American Human Development Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit initiative established to introduce more exact measurements of human well-being.

Initiative founders compared per capita health care spending with life expectancy and infant death rates of all 50 states and major nations.

"We were struck by how little relationship there is between spending more and getting better outcomes," said Sarah Burd-Sharps, American Human Development Project co-director. "The good news is we have the money to spend, if only we could spend the money more efficiently."

U.S. life expectancy at birth -- 78.3 -- is on par with that of Chile, a country that spends a tenth of what the U.S. spends.

"While it's true none of these other countries have a perfect system, each of them has elements we can learn from," Burd-Sharps said. "We need to be a bit more open about it."

Here is a by-the-numbers look at health care spending and state-by-state and national comparisons:

2,500,000,000,000

Total public and private health spending (in dollars) in 2009.

7,175

Combined public and private annual health care spending (in dollars) per person in the U.S. The next-highest country, Monaco, spends \$5,964 per person annually. Canada spends \$3,922 annually and the United Kingdom spends \$3,006.

5,888

Health expenditure (in dollars) per person in Wisconsin, the 15th-highest in the nation. Iowa's per-person expenditure is \$5,587 (ranked 24th), Illinois' expenditure is \$5,496 (27th). The per-person health expenditure in the District of Columbia is \$8,614. The highest-ranked state is Massachusetts, at \$6,939. The lowest-ranked state is Utah at \$4,124.

81.1

The nation's highest life expectancy, Hawaii. Only people in Japan, San Marino, Switzerland and Iceland live longer.

79.9

Life expectancy for residents of Wisconsin's third Congressional district, including Grant County.

79.3

Life expectancy for residents of Iowa's first Congressional district, including Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties.

78.3

Life expectancy for residents of Illinois' 16th Congressional district, including Jo Daviess County.

73.4

The nation's lowest life expectancy, Mississippi, comparable to Malaysia and Libya.

39

World ranking for American infant survival. A baby born today in nations such as Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Croatia or Cuba has a better chance of living to celebrate his or her first birthday than does a baby born in the U.S.

12



Iowa's ranking for life expectancy (79.5 years). Wisconsin (79.3) is 15th, Illinois (78.4) is 24th.

8

U.S. states that have lower life expectancy than Albania (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas and West Virginia).

7.3

Illinois' infant death rate (per 1,000 live births) in 2006 (national ranking: 30th). Iowa's rate was 5.2 (ranked fifth), Wisconsin's was 6.5 (ranked 22nd).

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