



State of the Nation's Health Care 2012

The State of the Nation's Health Care in 2012 is a story of Progress and Continuing Challenges

- Health care costs increased at the lowest rate in 50 years, continuing an eight year slow-down, although some of the most recent drop may be due to Americans forgoing needed care.
- Even so, spending on health care has reached an all-time high, and is projected to continue to grow faster than the economy, consuming a larger share of the economy as measured by GDP.
- Increased federal spending associated with an aging population and rising costs of health care continue to pose the greatest challenge to the fiscal health of the United States.
- Health status has improved on several key indicators of population health, including reductions in all five leading causes of death, but disparities continue for many demographic groups and poorer residents.
- The ACA has begun to reduce barriers to care for tens of millions of persons, including young adults, children with pre-existing conditions, and seniors who now have “no cost” access to preventive services and discounts on brand-name drugs.
- Yet more than 46 million still went without health insurance, and uninsured persons are more likely to delay or not receive needed care.
- There has been a dramatic increase in primary care physicians and other health professionals who are benefiting from scholarships and loan forgiveness under the NHSC, providing improved access to care for millions of persons in underserved communities—yet the United States still is facing a projected shortage of more than 40,000 primary care physicians, and many other critical fields also are facing severe shortages.