

overall impressions of the health care system as being increasingly priced out of reach of the average American.

These impressions were confirmed in a May 2007 report on global health care from the non-profit Commonwealth Fund. The study found that Americans receive the poorest health care, yet pay the most compared with consumers in Germany, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Of the six countries, the United States is the only one that does not provide universal health care. In addition, the United States lags on several key measures, according to the report.

- XX% of U.S. patients have difficulty getting care on nights or weekends, compared with XX% to XX% in other countries.
- The United States has the lowest percentage of patients with a regular doctor, at XX%.
- U.S. doctors are the least wired, with the lowest percentage using electronic medical records or receiving electronic updates on recommended treatments.

Yet per capita health spending in the United States in 2004 was \$XXX—twice that of the next highest spender, Germany, at \$XXX and almost XXX times as much as New Zealand at \$XXX per person.

Consumers are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with these disparities. In the ninth annual *Health Confidence Survey*, conducted in October 2006 by the Employee Benefit Research Institute, XX% of the 1,000 U.S. adults surveyed said they were dissatisfied with health insurance costs, compared with XX% in 2005. Less than XX in XX participants said they were satisfied with the cost of health insurance and with their out-of-pocket contributions for care, and about XX% of respondents said that their health insurance costs had increased in the past year. Among those whose health insurance costs had increased:

- XX% reduced their retirement savings, compared with XX% in 2004.
- XX% said that health insurance costs affected their ability to pay for basic necessities during the year, compared with XX% in 2004.

coverage in the United States, such as bariatric surgeries, are seeing strong expansion outside the country as Americans increasingly fly to XXXXX and XXXXX for gastric bypasses.

**Table 4-3:
Cost Savings From Medical Tourism for Various Procedures, 2007**

Country	Rhinoplasty	Face Lift	Breast Augmentation	Breast Reduction	Complete Liposuction	Gluteal Augmentation

Source: Kalorama Information.

Popular medical tourism destinations include XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX, XXXX XXXX, XXXX and XXXX. In many of these countries, medical tourism is an emerging industry that is being marketed aggressively. While XXXX has the largest number of U.S. Joint Commission-accredited hospitals, a growing number of XXXX hospitals are attaining this status as the country positions itself as a key destination for complex procedures.

Although medical tourism is currently an emerging practice in the United States, it is more established in other countries such as XXXX and XXXX, where international travel is common, health care is largely government-administered and waiting times for procedures can be long. In XXXX, for example, the number of procedures for which people were waiting reached XXXX in 2005.

If the U.S. health care system continues to deteriorate, it is likely that medical tourism by Americans will also expand. While this is unlikely to have a significant impact upon primary care, it nonetheless underscores the rising unrest of consumers regarding their health care options and their willingness to embrace alternate modes of treatment.