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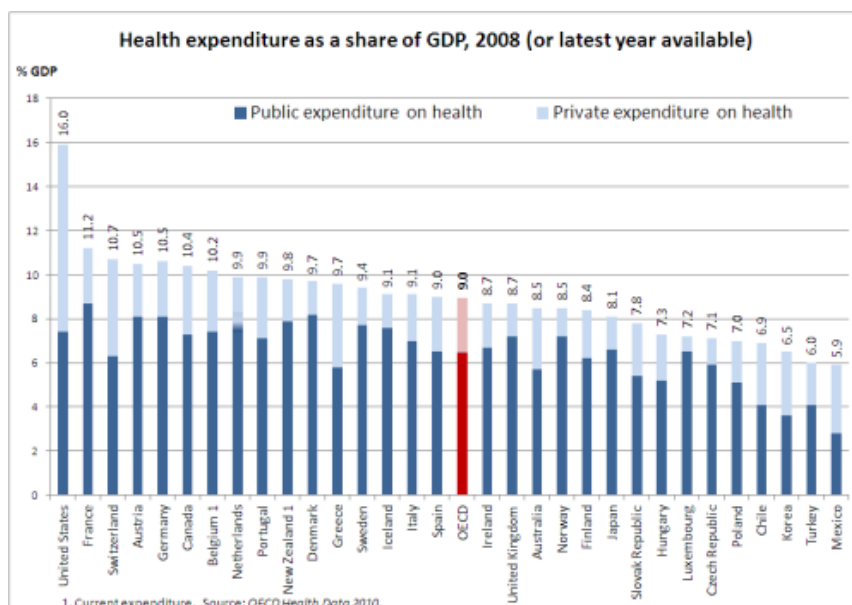
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## Growing health spending puts pressure on government budgets, according to OECD Health Data 2010

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29/06/2010 - In all OECD countries total spending on healthcare is rising faster than economic growth, pushing the average ratio of health spending to GDP from 7.8% in 2000 to 9.0% in 2008. Factors pushing health spending up - technological change, population expectations and population ageing - will continue to drive cost higher in the future.

In some countries the recent economic downturn, with GDP falling and healthcare costs rising, led to a sharp increase in the ratio of health spending to GDP. In Ireland, the percentage of GDP devoted to health increased from 7.5% in 2007 to 8.7% in 2008. In Spain, it rose from 8.4% to 9.0%.



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The United States spent \$7,538 per person on health in 2008, well over double the \$3,000 average of all OECD countries. The next biggest spenders, Norway and Switzerland, spent much less than the U.S. per capita but still some 50% more than the OECD average.

Governments of most OECD countries shoulder the lion's share of healthcare costs. The share of government expenditure devoted to health increased in most countries, rising from an average of 12% in 1990 to an all-time high of 16% in 2008. Given the urgent need to reduce their budget deficits, many OECD governments will have to make difficult choices to sustain their healthcare systems: curb the growth of public spending on health, cut spending in other areas, or raise taxes.

### Medical technologies are driving up spending

New medical technologies are improving diagnosis and treatment but they also increase health spending. **OECD Health Data 2010** shows that there has been rapid growth in the supply and use of computed tomography (CT) scanners and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units used for diagnostic purposes. MRI units per capita more than doubled on average across OECD countries between 2000 and 2008, reaching 13 machines per million population in 2008, up from 6 in 2000. The number of CT scanners rose to 24 per million population, up from 19 in 2000. The number of MRI units per capita is much greater in Japan, the United States, Italy and Greece than in other countries. These countries, along with Australia and Korea, also have more CT scanners.

MRI and CT scanners are expensive to buy and to operate. There are big differences in their use per capita - far more in the United States than in Canada, France or the Netherlands. The rapid growth in these diagnostic procedures over the past decade in the United States has raised concerns that some imaging may not be useful. To reduce unnecessary procedures and cut costs, many OECD countries are trying to promote rational use of costly medical technologies.

These are some of the findings from **OECD Health Data 2010**, the most comprehensive source of comparable statistics on health and health systems across the 31 OECD countries (including Chile as a new member this year) and 3 prospective members (Estonia, Israel and Slovenia). Covering the period 1960 to 2008, this interactive database can be used for comparative analyses on:

- Health status
- Risk factors to health (including trends in smoking and obesity)
- Health care resources and utilisation
- Long-term care resources and utilisation
- Health expenditure and financing
- Social protection (including public health coverage and private health insurance)
- Pharmaceutical markets

**OECD Health Data 2010** is available **online** to subscribers of [SourceOECD](#), the OECD online library.

It is also available on **CD-ROM** (in single-user or network installations). The database can be queried in English, French, German, and Spanish. Italian, Japanese and Russian are also available but exclusively in the online version. For information, please contact [sales@oecd.org](mailto:sales@oecd.org) or the OECD Online Bookshop ([www.oecd.org/bookshop](http://www.oecd.org/bookshop)).

Journalists are invited to contact the OECD's Media Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 97 00 or [news.contact@oecd.org](mailto:news.contact@oecd.org)) to obtain access to **OECD Health Data 2010**.

For further information about the content of the database, please contact Mark Pearson (tel. 33 1 45 24 92 69 or [mark.pearson@oecd.org](mailto:mark.pearson@oecd.org)) or Gaétan Lafortune (tel. 33 1 45 24 92 67 or [gaetan.lafortune@oecd.org](mailto:gaetan.lafortune@oecd.org)) in the OECD Health Division.

For more information, please go to [www.oecd.org/health/healthdata](http://www.oecd.org/health/healthdata).

Also available:

- [L'augmentation des dépenses de santé pèse sur les budgets publics, selon Eco-Santé OCDE 2010](#) (French)

