



# Who Cares about Health Care?: A Look at the US and Other Nations

*Genrich Krasko*

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Do we need another book on health care? Health care is a hot topic and many would like to learn how it works in the world, how we in this country are different from other nations, and why. To many it is especially important because they (as millions of others) are learning through their own experience how the new health care system – “Obamacare” – works. People will have many questions, and the book responds to them in a thoughtful and concise way as it has scrupulously analyzed the American health care system (its past and present), and has provided a detailed comparison with those of other countries. This book also differs from other books on health care because its sources of information are available to everyone: the Internet. However, reading this book will be different from simply surfing the Worldwide Web because not only has the author found interesting and important information, he has also selected it critically, rejecting biased or outdated material. Having unearthed a vast trove of information on health care in the United States and six other nations (Canada, France, Germany, Japan, England, and Israel), the author invites the reader to accompany him on a journey through different health care systems to explore ideas and practices that inspired other nations. None of the systems visited is fully appropriate for imitation, although a careful analysis and a lot of critical thinking would allow reader to better understand the America’s system. The content of the book is as follows: Introduction: Why This Book? It discusses the concept health-care-for-all and the conundrum: Is health care a right, or a commodity? The polarization in America between the Left and the Right has created a vacuum in between, a no-man’s land. Unfortunately, this land has been visited too infrequently, and that is the area that the book explores. Chapter 1: The History of America’s Health Care. A story of how the American health care system evolved. The struggle between those who wanted a health-care-for-all and those who opposed it was quite dramatic. Chapter 2: Health Care in the World: Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Great Britain, and Israel. Why these countries? –Canada is a “whipping boy” when it comes to health-care-for-all, and there exists an abundance of misinformation about its health care. –France’s is an example of a non-government-controlled system based on a number of non-profit health insurance funds, which cover about 70-80% of costs, leaving room for for-profit supplemental insurers. –Germany’s system is grounded in Otto von Bismarck’s 1883 revolutionary universal health care reform, which Bismarck characterized as “practical Christianity.” –Japan’s health care system is a Bismarckian one, with its own additional and original features. –Great Britain has a health care system almost completely government controlled and could be called “socialized.” –Israel, in spite of an extremely difficult social and political situation, has developed its own specific health care system on par with the best. Chapter 3: OBAMACARE: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Discussing the essence of the reform, the chapter answers some “foggy” questions, which are only gradually beginning to surface today. Chapter 4, Where Are We? America’s Health Care Today, discusses the economics and policy of American health care; it also discusses the most significant failures of our health care system: “head maladies” (vision, dentistry, and psychiatry), maternity services, and long-term health care. In the concluding chapter, How Are We Different? a detailed table of health care indicators is compiled in order to summarize how the American health care system differs from those of the aforementioned six countries. Appendix: President Nixon’s Special Message to the Congress Proposing a Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan (1974).

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