

## Health Care: Go Canadian

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I find Top 10 lists are a useful way to quickly distill large and complicated issues down to the bare essentials. So here are my Top 10 reasons the U.S. should adopt Canada's single-payer health-care system.

1. All Americans would have health insurance. This is the right thing to do because it reflects and promotes core values and notions of citizenship: equality, compassion, and social solidarity. Sickness doesn't discriminate. Neither should health care.
2. Health would improve. On almost every critical measure (life expectancy, infant mortality, etc.), Canada rates higher than the U.S., and we're among the best in the world.
3. It would cost less. Canada spends 9.8% of GDP on health care, while the U.S. spends more than 15%. A single-payer system is the less expensive way to go.
4. Patients would have more choice. In Canada, patients can choose whatever doctor, specialist, and hospital they want. Treatment decisions are left to patients and their doctors. No insurance companies meddle in our choices.
5. Quality of service would improve. In Canada, health providers never have to choose between their wealth and a patient's health. Our system forbids that choice. The vast majority of Canadians are highly satisfied with the quality of care they receive. In Canada, patients rarely sue physicians.
6. It would reduce the bureaucracy. Patients in Canada show their health card and get care. Health providers bill the government directly and get paid. It's that simple.
7. Fewer Americans would go bankrupt because of health-care costs. This is a major problem for many U.S. families. It rarely happens in Canada.
8. It would benefit business. Companies in Canada have a competitive advantage because they don't have to provide basic health-care coverage for their workers.
9. It would diminish labor strife. Health care is incidental in labor negotiations in Canada. It's a large and growing pitfall in contract negotiations in the U.S.
10. It would serve democracy. Most Americans want major, not incremental, health-care reform. Many Americans support a single-payer system. It is about responding to the wishes of the people.