

Recent data about the **Cuban Healthcare System** paints a picture of a vibrant and forward thinking “industry.” Here are some of the more illuminating fact:

Population: 11.394 million (July 2007 estimate).¹

Free Healthcare: Cubans are given free health care for life, provided by the Cuban government. Free health care is ensured by the Cuban Constitution (Article 50) that reads in part: “Everyone has the right to health protection and care. The state guarantees this right.”²

This universal health care is paid for in part by consumer taxes. Cuban citizens typically visit a local neighborhood medical clinic to see their local doctor and nurse. If they miss an appointment, their doctor’s office will call to check on them.

Prevention & Education Focus: The Cuban government encourages citizens to practice proper health care with a major emphasis on disease and illness prevention, and health education. Every year, Cubans receive one home visit by their doctor to check not only on patients’ health, but also their lifestyle and home environment.³

Key Health Statistic Comparisons⁴

	Cuba	U.S.	Canada
Life expectancy at birth	75 years, men 79 years, women	75 years, men 80 years, women	78 years, men 83 years, women
Infant mortality rate	6 %	6 %	5 %
Probability of dying < 5 years of age per 1000 live births	7	8	6
Health expenditure per capita	US\$229	US\$6,096	US\$3,173
Physicians per 1000 people	5.91 (66,567 total)	2.56 (730801 total)	2.14 (66,583 total)
Nurses per 1000 people	7.44 (83,880 total)	9.37 (2,669,603)	9.95 (309,756 total)
Expenditure on health as % of GDP	6.3 %	15.4 %	9.8 %
Uninsured residents	0	44.8 million ⁵	0

1. CIA World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html>
 2. CubaNet, http://www.cubanet.org/ref/dis/const_92_e.htm
 3. “Newsnight” program, BBC-TV, London, England, Aug. 1, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/5232628.stm> (can watch program video online)
 4. World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat2007.pdf>
 5. U.S. Census: www.census.gov/Press-release/www/releases/archives/health_care_insurance/009789.html

Hospital System: Many hospitals and clinics in Cuba are dedicated to Medical Tourism patients as well as diplomats serving in Cuba. These facilities specialize in the patient's native cuisine, Internet and cable television. Relatives are encouraged to stay with the patient to support, comfort and promote the healing process.

"Sicko": In the popular U.S. documentary film, "Sicko," now showing at theatres across North America, producer Michael Moore takes several 9/11 disaster responders to a Cuban hospital for safe and affordable medical treatment.

Kaiser Foundation Praises Cuban Healthcare:

Based on an in-depth 2001 visit to review Cuba's health care system, the highly respected Kaiser Family Foundation found:

"Cuba is quite proud of its health care system and seems to have every right to be. A poor island country whose limited resources are further circumscribed by a strict (U.S.) embargo, Cuba has nevertheless managed to provide health care to every citizen as a basic right. Their doctors and other health care providers are knowledgeable, extremely dedicated and believe in what they are doing. Cuba is a shining example of the power of public health to transform the health of an entire country by a commitment to prevention and by careful management of its medical resources. They share this expertise with the world and many countries have a lot to learn from them."⁶

Health Care Leadership:

Cuba developed the first vaccine to treat Meningitis B, which is available in Third World countries.⁷

Cuba developed the first synthetic vaccine to treat Hepatitis B, helping to increase its accessibility and to lower the cost for treating the serious disease.⁸

Universal Health Care Worldwide:

Like most industrialized nations, Cuba has universal health care. The U.S. is one few industrialized countries without universal health care. Some other countries with universal health care are Canada, UK, France, Germany, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Brazil.⁹

6. Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://www.kff.org/about/essifcubareport.cfm>

7. World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/genomics/professionals/applications/cuba/en/>

8. National Institute of Health, http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=15273367&dopt=AbstractPlus

9. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_health_care