

## Free Healthcare in America: What Does it Mean and How Do We Get There

Health is a human right. However, that does not seem to matter in the United States of America. The United States has one of the highest costs of healthcare in the world, yet they spend more on healthcare than all the other wealthy democracies in the world, according to the Harvard School of Public Health (2020). Wherever that money goes, it doesn't seem to benefit all Americans because they can't afford the fancy technology and life-saving drugs such as insulin. The main point against free healthcare in America is that it is too expensive. If that is the problem, then it is logical that money needs to be redirected to ensure a high quality of life for all Americans. Government spending should be redirected from nuclear weapons spending and instead use that money to provide free healthcare to U.S. citizens because it would save lives.

### **Free Healthcare would Save Lives**

People will die without free healthcare.

To be clear, according to Tanne (2008), 26,000 Americans die each year because of a lack of health insurance. That doesn't seem unlikely since the United States has one of the highest costs of healthcare in the world. The government states that free healthcare is just too expensive, and that is why free healthcare is not currently in place. The problem, however, is not that it is too expensive, it is that the government values war over human health, which is why they don't want to spend the money there. Billions of dollars go into nuclear weaponry spending. That is money spent on weapons of mass destruction that could be going toward saving a human life. It is important to be prepared in case there ever is a war, but America spends more money on nuclear warfare than any other country. During COVID-19 alone, according to Blair (2022), more than 335,000 lives would've been saved during the pandemic if the U.S. had universal healthcare. Most working Americans rely on health insurance from their employers, and when

COVID-19 hit, 9 million Americans became unemployed. This resulted in the loss of insurance for many of those Americans. If free healthcare had been in place, lives would've been saved.

Unfortunately, the government values war over human health.

Without access to free healthcare in America, people will die. The reason that free healthcare doesn't exist yet in the U.S., is that the government does not want to spend the money.

According to Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (2019), proposals have been estimated to cost the federal government roughly \$28-32 trillion over a decade. With the current

Table 1.  
**Projected Costs of Nuclear Forces, by Department and Function**  
Billions of Dollars

	2021			Total, 2021-2030		
	DoD	DOE	Total	DoD	DOE	Total
<b>CBO's Projections of Budgeted Amounts for Nuclear Forces*</b>						
<b>Nuclear delivery systems and weapons</b>						
<b>Strategic nuclear delivery systems and weapons</b>						
Ballistic missile submarines	9.2	1.0	10.2	130	15	145
Intercontinental ballistic missiles	4.2	0.7	4.9	70	12	82
Bombers	3.1	1.6	4.6	41	12	53
Other DoD nuclear activities <sup>b</sup>	1.4	n.a.	1.4	17	n.a.	17
Subtotal	17.9	3.3	21.1	259	39	297
Tactical nuclear delivery systems and weapons	0.4	0.5	0.8	9	8	17
<b>Nuclear weapons laboratories and supporting activities</b>						
Stockpile services	n.a.	0.9	0.9	n.a.	10	10
Facilities and infrastructure	n.a.	6.8	6.8	n.a.	80	80
Other stewardship and support activities <sup>c</sup>	n.a.	4.8	4.8	n.a.	52	52
Subtotal	n.a.	12.6	12.6	n.a.	142	142
Subtotal, Nuclear Delivery Systems and Weapons	18.3	16.3	34.6	268	189	456
<b>Command, control, communications, and early-warning systems</b>						
Command and control	1.4	n.a.	1.4	20	n.a.	20
Communications	1.7	n.a.	1.7	25	n.a.	25
Early warning	4.4	n.a.	4.4	49	n.a.	49
Subtotal, Command, Control, Communications, and Early-Warning Systems	7.5	n.a.	7.5	94	n.a.	94
<b>Total Budgeted Amounts for Nuclear Forces</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>551</b>
<b>CBO's Estimates of Additional Costs Based on Historical Cost Growth</b>						
	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	43	40	83
<b>Total Estimated Cost of Nuclear Forces</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>634</b>

Table 1. Data Source: Congressional Budget Office, using data from the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy. See [www.cbo.gov/publication/57130#data](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/57130#data).

allocation of government money, free healthcare is not attainable. As seen in Table 1, an estimated 634 billion dollars is to be spent on nuclear forces from 2021-2030. This funding alone can jumpstart the movement

toward free healthcare. The change won't be immediate but could benefit the next generation of sons, daughters, and grandchildren. This is why government spending should be redirected from nuclear weapons spending and instead use that money to provide free healthcare to U.S. citizens because it would save lives.

People will die without free healthcare. If the government begins to redirect money, according to Galvani, A. P., Parpia, A. S., Foster, E. M., Singer, B. H., and Fitzpatrick, M. C. (2020), an estimated 68,000 lives and 1.73 million life years each year would be saved, by ensuring healthcare access for all Americans. By redirecting funds from an unnecessary military sector, lives could be saved. Since healthcare in the United States is so expensive, people aren't able to afford check-ups that might lead to the discovery of a life-ending disease or be able to afford medical devices like epi-pens and inhalers. With free healthcare, Americans can sleep knowing they have the best possible chance to survive in a country where that should be the most crucial goal above all else.

Vote people into office that want to implement free healthcare. The reason nothing has happened before, is that this has not happened. Voting may seem discouraging, because who knows if the vote counts. An issue like this doesn't get fixed immediately. People need to vote for politicians that are for healthcare, state by state until the government is forced to listen to what the people want. While the people working towards this may not be able to reap the benefits for another decade or two, at least the next generation of family and friends will have this chance.

### **Conclusion**

Right now, the government is valuing war over human health. They don't benefit, so why do it? Make them listen until they cannot deny that they are responsible for the lives lost. Government spending should be redirected from nuclear weapons spending and instead use that money to provide free healthcare to U.S. citizens because it would save lives. This issue is far from over, but every change starts somewhere, and now is the time to fight for the right to your health.