

## VISUAL 10.1

# HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

### The Good News

- Medical care in the United States is often considered to be the best in the world.
  - In 2007, average life expectancy for Americans had increased to 78 years.
  - U.S. physicians are highly educated and use the most advanced medical equipment and technologies.

### The Bad News

- Accessibility and costs are major problems.
  - About 47 million Americans do not have health insurance.
  - The lack of health insurance is concentrated among poorer Americans.
  - Many young people with good health choose not to buy health insurance.
  - Health care spending overall is expected to double to \$4.1 trillion in 2016, consuming 20 percent of GDP.

VISUAL 10.2

**A DECISION GRID ON HEALTH CARE POLICY CHOICES**

**Directions:** Rate each of the three health care plans below according to the four criteria shown in the top row of the grid. For each criterion, rate each plan from 1 to 3, with 1 being the lowest rating and 3 being the highest. Give reasons for your ratings.

	<b>Improve Accessibility</b>	<b>Increase Role of Individual Consumers</b>	<b>Increase Price Competition</b>	<b>Limit the Role of Government</b>
<b>Pay or Play</b>	<b>Rating: 2</b> <b>Reason:</b> Employees and most others would be covered.	<b>Rating: 2</b> <b>Reason:</b> Most individual consumers would still depend on third- party payers.	<b>Rating: 2</b> <b>Reason:</b> Limited or no increase in price competition.	<b>Rating: 2</b> <b>Reason:</b> Expands the role of government to tax and administer the program.
<b>Tax Credits</b>	<b>Rating: 1</b> <b>Reason:</b> Expands the number of people with health insurance but allows others to opt out.	<b>Rating: 3</b> <b>Reason:</b> Increases the role of individual consumers to make decisions about purchasing the plan they wish to have.	<b>Rating: 3</b> <b>Reason:</b> The expanded role of consumers will increase price competition among insurance providers.	<b>Rating: 3</b> <b>Reason:</b> Since no new tax is imposed and no new agency is established, it would maintain a limited role of government.
<b>National Health Insurance</b>	<b>Rating: 3</b> <b>Reason:</b> All citizens would be covered.	<b>Rating: 1</b> <b>Reason:</b> Since consumers would not pay directly for health care services, the role of consumers would be reduced.	<b>Rating: 1</b> <b>Reason:</b> Provides no increase in price competition since government is the only payer.	<b>Rating: 1</b> <b>Reason:</b> Significantly expands the role of government. Taxes will have to be increased and new agencies will have to be established.