

Universal health care makes ethical and economic sense

What do the [10 Healthiest Nations](#) have in common? While they all may differ in culture, lifestyle and health system organisation there is one important feature they all share – some form of universal health care (see below)

Health care is only one contributor to the health of a population but it is one that can make a big difference. It is also one factor that can be changed to address identified gaps and inequities in access to health care and health outcomes.

Evidence shows that countries with more equitable health systems spend less and achieve more than those with less equitable approaches to health care. It makes sense from both an ethical and practical perspective to make health care accessible to all in the community.

This is why AHCR supports policies which will strengthen Australia's health system to deliver genuinely universal health care to all in our community.

1. Spain

All Spaniards have access to the country's **universal healthcare**. The Spanish National Healthcare System ("Instituto Nacional de la Salud"), founded on Spain's General Healthcare Act of 1986, guarantees **universal coverage and free healthcare access** to all Spanish nationals, regardless of economic situation or participation in the social security network.

<https://healthmanagement.org/c/hospital/issuearticle/overview-of-the-spanish-healthcare-system>

2. Italy

The healthcare system in Italy is a regionally based national health service known as Servizio Sanitario Nazionale (SSN). It provides **universal coverage**, with public healthcare free of charge at the point of service.

<https://www.allianzworldwidecare.com/en/support/view/national-healthcare-systems/healthcare-in-italy/>

3. Iceland

Healthcare in Iceland is universal. The healthcare system is largely paid for by taxes (85%) and to some extent by service fees (15%) and is administered by the **Ministry of Welfare**. A considerable portion of government spending is assigned to health care. There is almost no private health insurance in Iceland and no private hospitals

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_in_Iceland

4. Japan

The government regulates nearly all aspects of the **universal Statutory Health Insurance System** (SHIS). The national and local governments are required by law to ensure a system that efficiently provides good-quality medical care. <https://international.commonwealthfund.org/countries/japan/>

5. Sweden

Three basic principles apply to all health care in Sweden:

Human dignity: All human beings have an equal entitlement to dignity and have the same rights regardless of their status in the community.

Need and solidarity: Those in greatest need take precedence in being treated.

Cost-effectiveness: When a choice has to be made, there should be a reasonable balance between costs and benefits, with cost measured in relation to improvement in health and quality of life.

Coverage is universal and automatic.

<https://international.commonwealthfund.org/countries/sweden/>

6. Switzerland

Healthcare in Switzerland is **universal** and is regulated by the Swiss Federal Law on Health Insurance. There are no free state-provided health services, but private health insurance is compulsory for all persons residing in Switzerland (within three months of taking up residence or being born in the country). The **universal compulsory coverage** provides for treatment in case of illness or accident (unless another accident insurance provides the cover) and pregnancy. Health insurance covers the costs of medical treatment and hospitalization of the insured.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_in_Switzerland

7. Australia

The federal government funds Medicare, a **universal public health insurance program** providing free or subsidized access to care for Australian citizens, residents with a permanent visa, and New Zealand citizens following their enrollment in the program and confirmation of identity.

<https://international.commonwealthfund.org/countries/australia/>

8. Singapore

Singapore offers **universal health care coverage** to citizens, with a financing system anchored in the twin philosophies of individual responsibility and affordable health care for all. Coverage is funded through a combination of government subsidies (from general tax revenue), multilayered health care financing schemes, and private individual savings, all administered at the national level.

<https://international.commonwealthfund.org/countries/singapore/>

9. Norway

The Norwegian healthcare system is founded on the principles of **universal access**, decentralisation and free choice of provider. <https://www.lifeinnorway.net/healthcare/> Government is responsible for providing health care to the population, in accordance with the stated goal of equal access to health care regardless of age, race, gender, income, or area of residence.

<https://international.commonwealthfund.org/countries/norway/>

10. Israel

In 1995, Israel passed a national health insurance (NHI) law, which provides for **universal coverage**. In addition to financing insurance, government provides financing for the public health service and is active in areas such as the control of communicable diseases, screening, health promotion and education, and environmental health, as well as the direct provision of various other services. It is also actively involved in the financial and quality regulation of key health system actors, including health plans, hospitals, and health care professionals.

<https://international.commonwealthfund.org/countries/israel/>