



Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on August 24, 2010

Medical Care Facts and Fables

The most basic fact is that it is cheaper to remain sick than to get medical treatment. What is cheapest of all is to die instead of getting life-saving medications and treatment, which can be very expensive.

Despite these facts, most of us tend to take a somewhat more parochial view of the situation when it is we ourselves who are sick or who face a potentially fatal illness. But what if that decision is taken out of your hands under ObamaCare and is being made for you by a bureaucrat in Washington?

We won't know what that leads to until the time comes. As Nancy Pelosi said, we will find out what is in the bill after it has passed. But even now, after ObamaCare has been passed, not many people want to read its 2,400 pages. Even if you did, you would still not know what it would be like in practice, after more than 150 boards and commissions issue their specific regulations.



Fortunately — in fact, very fortunately — you don't have to slog through 2,400 pages of legalistic jargon or turn to a fortune teller to divine the future. A new book, *The Truth About ObamaCare* by Sally Pipes of the Pacific Research Institute lays out the facts in the plainest English.

While she can't tell you the future, she can tell you enough about government-run medical systems in other countries that it will not take a rocket scientist to figure out what is in store for us if ObamaCare doesn't get repealed before it takes full effect in 2014. It is not a pretty picture.

We hear a lot about how wonderful it is that the Canadians or the British or the Swedes get free medical treatment because the government runs the system. But we don't hear much about the quality of that medical care.

We don't hear about more than 4,000 expectant mothers who gave birth inside a hospital, but not in the maternity ward, in Britain in just one year. They had their babies in hallways, bathrooms and even elevators.

British newspapers have for years carried stories about the neglect of patients under the National Health Service, of which this is just one. When nurses don't get around to taking a pregnant woman to the maternity ward in time, the baby doesn't wait.

But the American media don't tell you about such things when they are gushing over the wonders of "universal health care" that will "bring down the cost of medical care."

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where the government runs the medical system. Why? Because the latest drugs cost more and it is cheaper to let people die. Instead, the media spin is that various countries with government-run medical systems have life expectancies that are as long as ours, or longer. That is very clever as media spin, if you don't bother to stop and think about it.

Author Sally Pipes did bother to stop and think about it in her book, *The Truth About ObamaCare*. She points out that medical care is just one of the factors in life expectancy.

She cites a study by Professors Ohsfeldt and Schneider at the University of Iowa, which shows that, if you leave out people who are victims of homicide or who die in automobile accidents, Americans live longer than people in any other Western country.

Doctors do not prevent homicides or car crashes. In the things that doctors can affect, such as the survival rates of cancer patients, the United States leads the world.

Americans get the latest pharmaceutical drugs, sometimes years before those drugs are available to people in Britain or in other countries where the government runs the medical system. Why? Because the latest drugs cost more and it is cheaper to let people die.

The media have often said that we have higher infant mortality rates than other countries with government medical care systems. But we count every baby that dies and other countries do not. If the media don't tell you that, so much the better for ObamaCare.

But is life and death something to play spin games about?

Thomas Sowell graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University (1958) and went on to receive his master's in economics from Columbia University (1959) and a doctorate in economics from the University of Chicago (1968). He is the author of 28 books including his most recent, *Intellectuals and Society*. Currently he is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His Web site is www.tsowell.com.

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