



Overview of healthcare systems

Healthcare systems are very different from one country to another, a few examples



UK

- In the UK healthcare is free of charge to all patients through the NHS (National Health Service). This is paid for through taxes.
- The government hires and pays the doctors and trusts to run the hospitals and surgeries.



China

- China had a fairly successful cooperative medical system. When that system was dismantled, costs rose dramatically and no one paid them. As a result, 100 million people lost their insurance coverage. The cost of going to the hospital is often enough to put people paying out of pocket and into bankruptcy.



Brazil

- The public option is the government-funded Sistema Unico de Saude (Unified Health System, or SUS). SUS receives funding from multiple tax sources. These multiple taxes have been unable to keep up with the rising cost of health care, which could bankrupt SUS in just a few years.



USA

- The US relies heavily on private insurance plans to fund a pay-as-you-go health system.
- About 87% of the population have some form of coverage. 48% of the population are covered by their employers. 31% are covered by government insurance programs for low-income individuals and the elderly.



France

- Healthcare is provided by the government. Funds are generated from the public based on their income. In return, the country reimburses about 70% of most medical bills.
- France is renowned for ensuring that all costs are covered by the government; even expensive and experimental drugs or surgeries.



Canada

- The public have a healthcare system that is funded by income taxes and sales tax. The national government has oversight for members of the military and native people on reserves, but the 10 provincial and three territorial governments administer the rest.

Health Systems : IRELAND

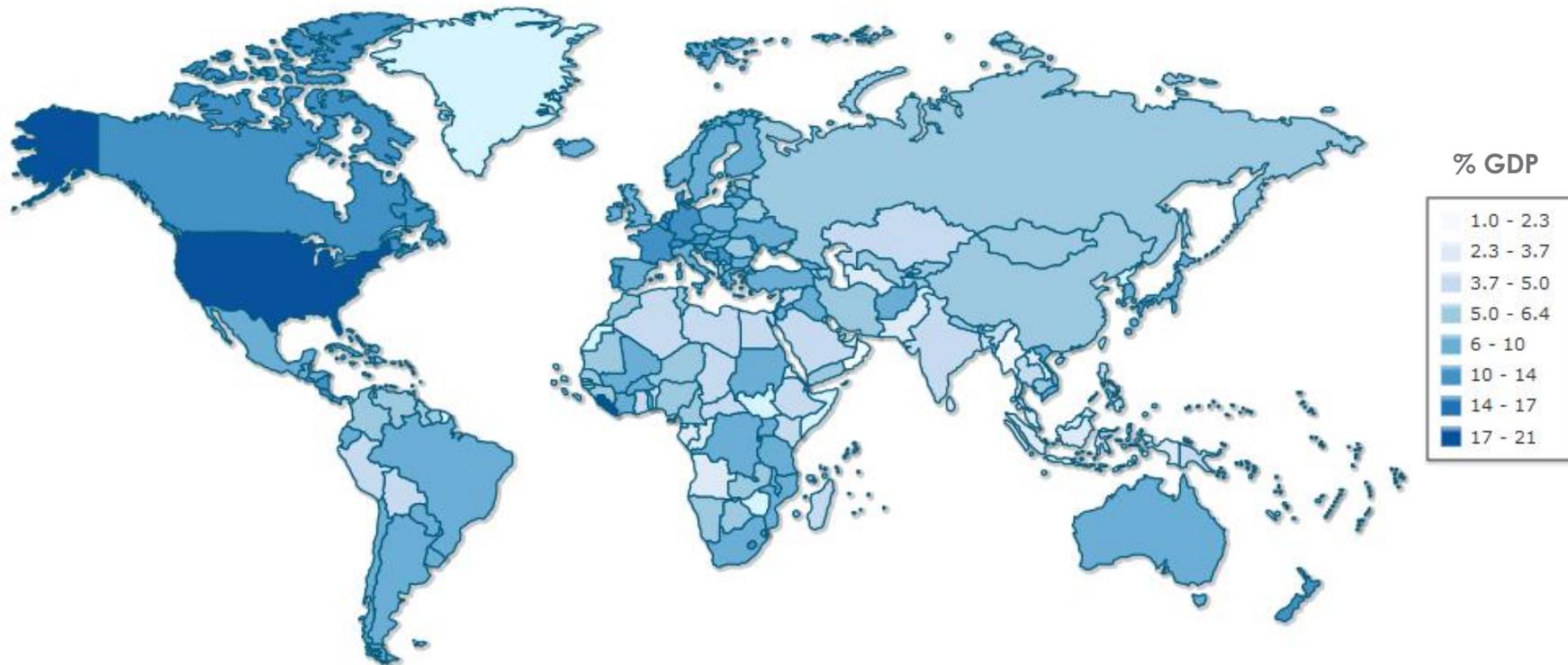


Public/private combination system => The State runs the hospitals and system (16% of all Government spending) provides a basic standard of care with about 40% State-funded, but over a third opting for private insurance. The hospital system is under stress and many complain about the system. New and different proposals are under discussion. Most recently, all under 5s were given free GP cover. A visit to a GP costs about €60, except for those with State funding.

Citizens => Complain consistently about the system and those who pay insurance find their premiums rising constantly. Although the system is free, the vast majority now pay €100 to visit a hospital and indeed most pay for their own medication.

Particularities => Doctors' interests effectively control access and there is an inbuilt scarcity of hospital consultants, although Ireland trains a much higher number of doctors than most countries. The healthcare system has been reorganised a number of times with little success. A former Health Minister (and Prime Minister) described running the Department as "like working in Angola".

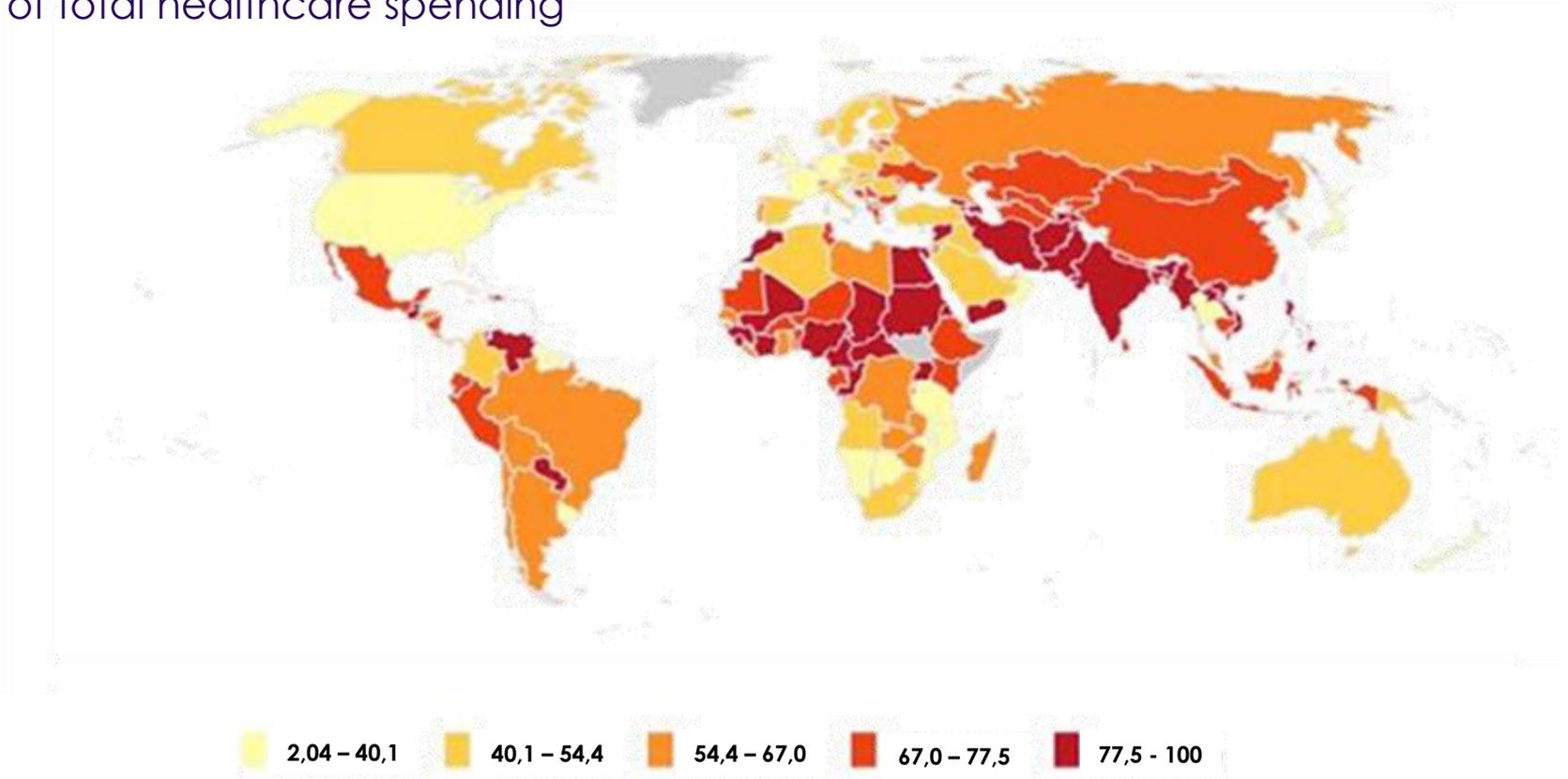
Healthcare expenditures





Out-of-pocket expenses in healthcare

% of total healthcare spending





Overview of physician demographics



Health Systems: Total physicians

