

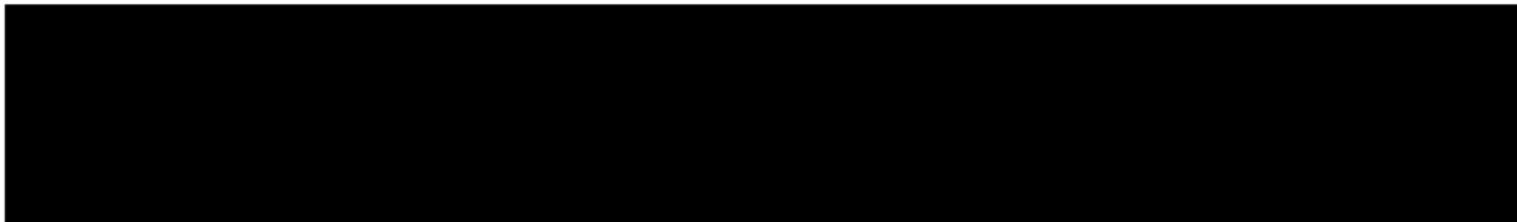


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Industry

Main article: [Health care industry](#)



The health care industry is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries.^[6] Consuming over 10 percent of gross domestic product of most developed nations, health care can form an enormous part of a country's [economy](#). In 2003, health care costs paid to [hospitals](#), [physicians](#), [nursing homes](#), [diagnostic](#) laboratories, [pharmacies](#), [medical device](#) manufacturers and other components of the health care system, consumed 15.3 percent^[7] of the [GDP](#) of the [United States](#), the largest of any country in the world. For the United States, the health share of gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to hold steady in 2006 before resuming its historical upward trend, reaching 19.6 percent of GDP by 2016. ^[8] In 2001, for the [OECD](#) countries the average was 8.4 percent ^[9] with the [United States](#) (13.9%), [Switzerland](#) (10.9%), and [Germany](#) (10.7%) being the top three.