**Health-care Notes:**

Anger and frustration with America’s health care system is rising. Main Issues: Health care cost, quality of the health care that people receive, access to health care

**Reasons for rising medical costs:**

Hospital care (# of people visiting hospitals, length of stay, aging population, emergency room visits for the uninsured)

1. Advances in medical technology and more expensive tests and treatments
2. Fear of malpractice suits which leads to doctors ordering more batteries of tests (known as Defense Medicine)
3. Prescription Drug Costs (rising because of increased advertising, increased # of prescriptions written, # of elderly Americans)
4. Medicare and Medicaid make up about 33% of the nation’s medical costs

**Quality of Healthcare:**

1. Managed Care-Individuals pay a set amount per month for health care and receive certain health-care services. The more money you have, the better a plan you can purchase. 75% of Americans are on a managed plan.
2. People argue that managed care plans have cut the amount of time that doctors spend with patients, decreases the quality of that care, and makes it more difficult for people to see specialists.

**Access to Healthcare:**

1. Access to health care is limited by the geographic distribution of doctors (more in wealthy urban and suburban areas, not many in rural areas or poor urban areas)
2. Access to health care is also limited by doctors choosing to specialize in areas like surgery, cardiology, obstetrics, and not to go into general practice. In general, this has occurred because specialists make higher salaries than general or family practitioners.

**Inequality and Health:**

1. The effects of poverty, such as malnutrition, lack of health insurance, and lack of access leads to rising costs for all Americans
2. Children born to poor families are 60% more likely to die within the first year of life.
3. Children born to poor families are three times more likely than children born to wealthy families to have only fair or poor health
4. 34 Million+ Americans face hunger and cannot afford to buy food for a healthy diet. Children who are hungry are four times more likely to have problems concentrating in school
5. More than 23% of children do not have any health insurance coverage
6. Uninsured people are more unlikely to get physicals, preventative care, and often will postpone treatment even for serious conditions, this often results in more frequent trips to the Emergency Room to receive basic health care.

**Other Health Care Issues Today:**

Should healthcare be public or private? National Healthcare System or individual health accounts?

Do Medicare/Medicaid need an overhaul?

Should people be denied insurance based on pre-existing conditions?

Alternative Medicine vs. Traditional Medicine

58% of people who have contracted AIDS since 1981 have died (448,060), 21 million have died globally, 70% of all persons with AIDS live in Sub-Saharan Africa—life expectancy in these countries has fallen to less than 47 years of age.

Leading causes of death in America are: Heart Disease, Cancer, Obesity, Accidents, Suicide.