



BlackEconomics.org®

“Black American Health Economics Again”

Introduction

Despite our grandest efforts to ensure that BlackEconomics.org releases remain topically unbiased (i.e., that they reflect randomness), it turns out that over the past 18 months we have produced at least four releases that consider Black American health economics topics.ⁱ Also during the period, we prepared, but have temporarily withdrawn, a draft BlackEconomics.org Working Paper that considers Black Americans’ roles in the production and consumption of healthcare and related outcomes for multifactor productivity for the US *Health services* sector.ⁱⁱ

This release on the health economics topic could reflect our personal bias due to our concerns about health or it could be that the winter season elevates concerns broadly about health. In any event, our intent is to be brief and share important (straightforward) statistics about the production of healthcare services in the US, which we have not highlighted before, and which strongly reinforces our previous releases on the Black American healthcare topic. Also, we invite readers to consider two recent and interesting international press articles on health-related topics that are partially indicative of the state of the world’s current healthcare economy.

Important US Health Services Production Statistics

We have cited often that the annual value of production of health and health-related goods and services is approaching 20 percent of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). This “share” estimate is derived in nominal (inflation unadjusted) dollars; i.e., the calculation does not account for price change and, therefore, temporal comparisons are not statistically sound.

Accordingly, observing recently released Industry Statistics from the U.S Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) on “Contributions to Percent Change in Real Gross Domestic Product by Industry,” you may find it no surprise that, over the period 1998-2023, the *Healthcare and social assistance* industry ranks fifth among 21 major US industries in the size of its annual average contribution to the change in real GDP growth.ⁱⁱⁱ That is a near top tier position and it is in “real” (inflation adjusted) terms. BEA reports that over the period, *Healthcare and social assistance’s* annual average contribution to U.S. real GDP growth was 0.205 percentage point;^{iv} and real GDP growth averaged 2.377 percent. That is, *Healthcare and social assistance* accounted for on average about nine percent (8.6 percent) of real GDP growth.

Health in Recent International Press Articles

The two recent international press articles that we highlight are from the British Broadcast Company (BBC). Given the integrated and interlinked nature of global media, you may have observed these articles in a US press source. The following bullets characterize and interpret the articles from a BlackEconomics.org perspective:

- David Rhodes (2025). “We remortgaged to buy our kids’ ADHD medication.” BBC; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy8x4ny52vx0> (Ret. 011425). This article has unexpected twists. It does not simply describe a family’s requirement to secure more funds (through remortgaging (removing equity during a mortgage refinance)) to purchase medicine alone. Rather, it describes a UK National Health Service (NHS) problem where the queue for (mental) health reviews is so long that those with resources enter the review queue then move independently to acquire medication at a much higher price than would prevail with an NHS approval. They pay the higher price until they reach the head of the queue, complete an NHS review, and obtain approval. Given the rising cost of healthcare in the US, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) to healthcare and related industries, and rising rumblings about creating a single-

payer healthcare system in the US, should we expect similar future outcomes? On the other hand, it is quite perplexing how and why our world is producing youth who are unable to function properly without consuming mental health medication. This is a new phenomenon.

- Sean Coughlan (2025). “Kate reveals she is in remission from cancer.” BBC; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2m8g2vp41o> (Ret. January 14, 2025). This press article describes a recent announcement of the UK’s Princess Catherine’ cancer remission about one year after the first announcement of her cancer. Our observations of press stories of the “rich and/or famous,” who are said to contract cancer are intriguing and generally generate the following scenario: (i) Cancer announcement; (ii) disappearance to a “world class” treatment facility; (iii) a resurfacing when treatment is completed; and (iv) announcement of remission. It might be appropriate and accurate to modify the foregoing characterization of “rich and/or famous” to include a “White” racial reference. On the other hand, when the switch is flipped to include a “Black” racial reference, then we often observe a less favorable scenario. For example, consider the recent passings of the Hon. Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (Dem.-TX); Jessica Pettway; Virgil Abloh; and Chad Boseman. And then there are Black America’s poor, who die disproportionately from cancer each year.^v

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Endnotes

- ⁱ The four releases in ascending date order are: (a) “Missing the Point.” <https://www.blackeconomics.org/BEFuture/mtp062323.pdf>; (062323) ; (b) “Headline Thoughts No. 3.” <https://www.blackeconomics.org/BEMedia/colhlt3080924.pdf>; (originally released on 080924); (c) “Producing our Own Health Wealth.” <https://www.blackeconomics.org/BELit/poohw110124.pdf>; (110124); and (d) “Are U.S. and Black America’s Interest Aligned?” <https://blackeconomics.org/BELit/ausabaia011025.pdf>; (011025).
- ⁱⁱ The temporarily withdrawn BlackEconomics.org Working Paper is: Brooks Robinson (2024). “Addressing the Negative Multifactor Productivity Conundrum: Elevating Black Americans’ Contributions to US Productivity.” We expect that this working paper will be revised and rereleased after further research and development.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (2024). “Contributions to Percent Change in Real Gross Domestic Product by Industry:” A part of BEA’s Interactive Data for GDP-by-Industry. <https://www.bea.gov/itable/gdp-by-industry>. The data are available among the “Value Added by Industry” Interactive Data Tables. (Ret. 011425).
- ^{iv} The top four industries with the highest average contributions to real GDP growth over the period are (in descending order): (a) *Real estate and rental and leasing* (0.340 percentage point); (b) *Information* (0.335 percentage point); (c) *Professional, scientific, and technical services* (0.293 percentage point); and (d) *Manufacturing* (0.272 percentage point).
- ^v According to *National Vital Statistics Reports*, cancer (malignant neoplasms) was the second leading cause of death for Non-Hispanic Black Americans during 2022. Cancer accounted for 17.2 percent of all deaths. Heart disease was the leading cause of death (21.6 percent). See Sally Curtin, et al (2024). “Death: Leading Causes for 2022.” US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vol. 73; No. 10, p. 13; <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr73/NVSR73-10.pdf> (Ret. 011625). It is common knowledge that the poor suffer higher cancer death rates than do the nonpoor. This is particularly true for Black Americans.