

US life expectancy edges upward as cancer death rate drops

The number of fatal [drug overdoses](#) declined for the first time in 28 years, and U.S. [life expectancy](#) at birth ticked upward for the first time since 2014, according to long-awaited numbers for 2018 published [January 30] by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Despite the encouraging elements of the CDC mortality report, the broader pattern for American health remains sobering. Life expectancy improved by the tiniest of increments, from 78.6 to 78.7 years.

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Another new overview of [American health](#), released early [January 30] by the Commonwealth Fund, a health-care research organization based in New York, noted that the United States has a lower life expectancy than 10 peer nations — Germany, Britain, Canada, Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland — despite spending far more per capita on health care than any of them. The suicide rate, at 14 per 100,000 people, is twice that of Britain, the report said.

“We live sicker and die younger than our counterparts around the world — despite spending around twice as much as other nations on health care,” said Roosa Tikkanen, a research associate at the Commonwealth Fund and the lead author of the report.

“We can do better,” she added.

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