

BENOKRAITIS

# SOC<sup>5</sup>

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY



# 14

## Health and Medicine



NOW WITH SOC ONLINE

# Chapter Review



1. What is health?
2. What factors influence health and medical care?
3. Describe the conditions of health care in the United States and around the world.
4. Distinguish among the sociological perspectives on health and medicine.

# Health and Illness



- **Health:** the state of physical, mental, and social well-being
- **Disease:** an alteration of the normal physical and/or mental structures of the body or mind
  - **Chronic disease:** long-term or lifelong illnesses that develop gradually or are present from birth; increase as people age
  - **Acute diseases:** illnesses that strike suddenly and often disappear rapidly but can cause incapacitation or death
- **Disability:** physical or mental impairments that limit a person's ability to perform an important activity

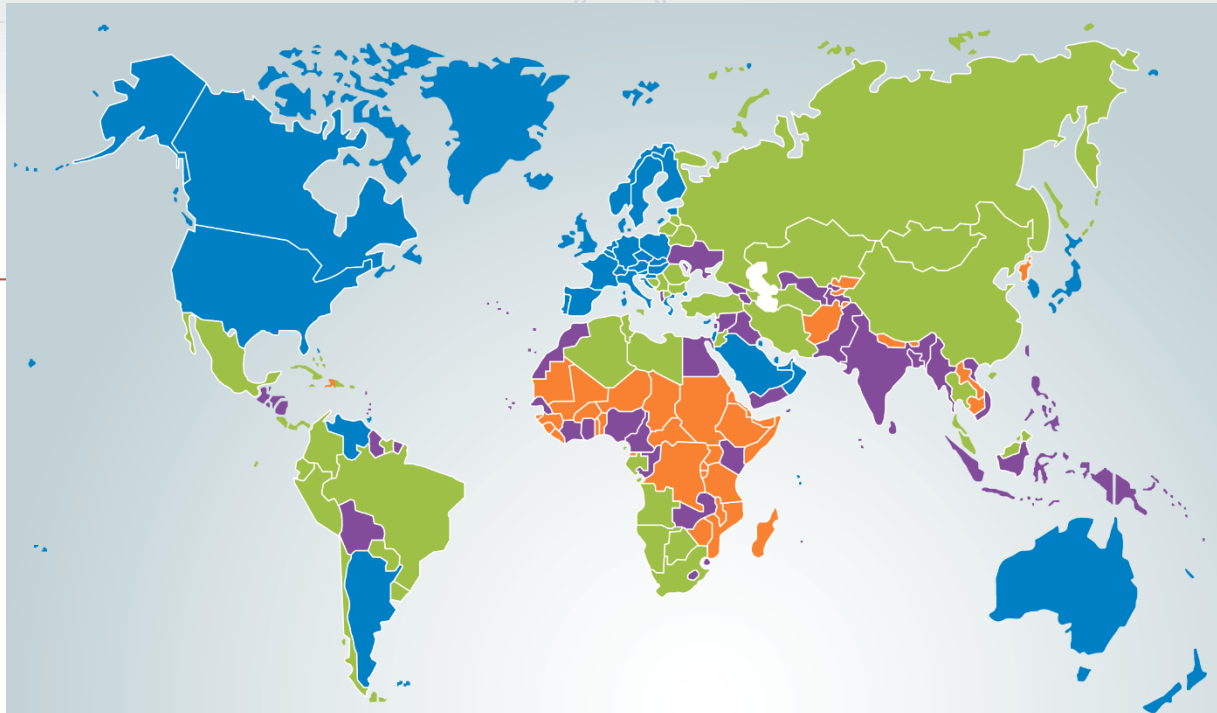
# Health and Illness



- **Epidemiology:** the study of the causes and distribution of disease within a population
- **Social epidemiology:** Examines how societal factors affect the distribution of disease within a population
- **Incidence:** the number of new cases of a health problem that occur in a given population during a given time period
- **Prevalence:** the total number of cases (extent) of an illness or health problem

# Figure 14.1

## Worldwide Health Gaps

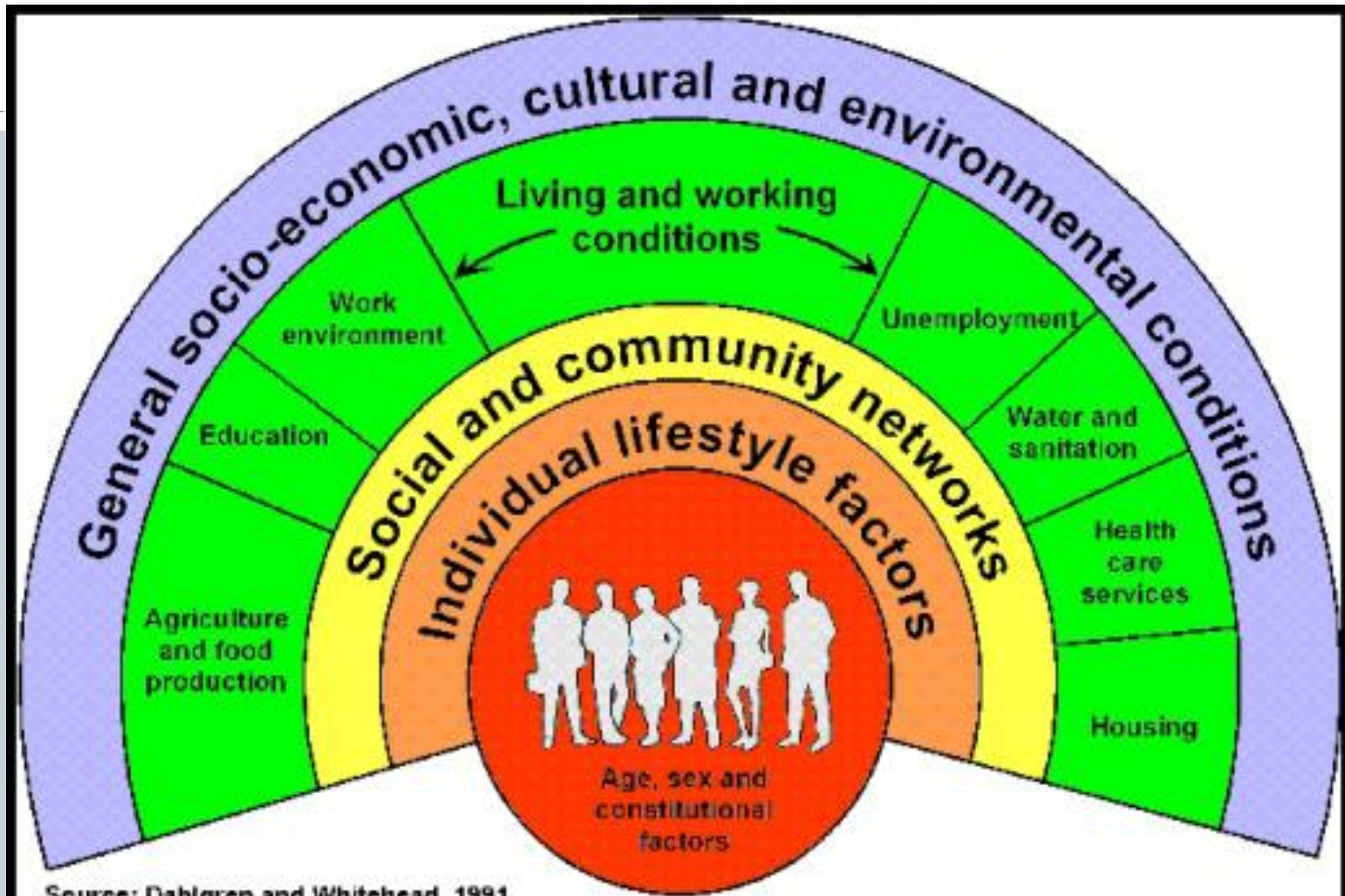


■ Low income   
 ■ Lower middle income   
 ■ Upper middle income   
 ■ High income

Income Group and Number of Countries	GNI	Life Expectancy at Birth	Infant Deaths per 1,000 Live Births	Per Person Total Expenditure on Health*
Low income (31)	\$1,045 or less	59	53	\$83
Lower middle income (51)	\$1,046–\$4,125	67	44	\$235
Upper middle income (53)	\$4,126–\$12,735	74	16	\$766
High income (80)	\$12,736 or more	79	5	\$4,516

\*These figures include private, employer, and government expenditures in U.S. dollars.

Sources: Based on World Bank, 2015; World Health Organization, 2015, Tables 1 and 7.



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

# National Public Health Week



- **American Public Health Association**  
[Factors affecting health](#) (Infographic)
  - Environment – eg. Air quality
  - Behavior – eg. smoking
  - Medical – eg. Access to health care services.

# Health and Illness



Sociologists study the social sources of health, illness, and mortality.

- **Environmental factors:**

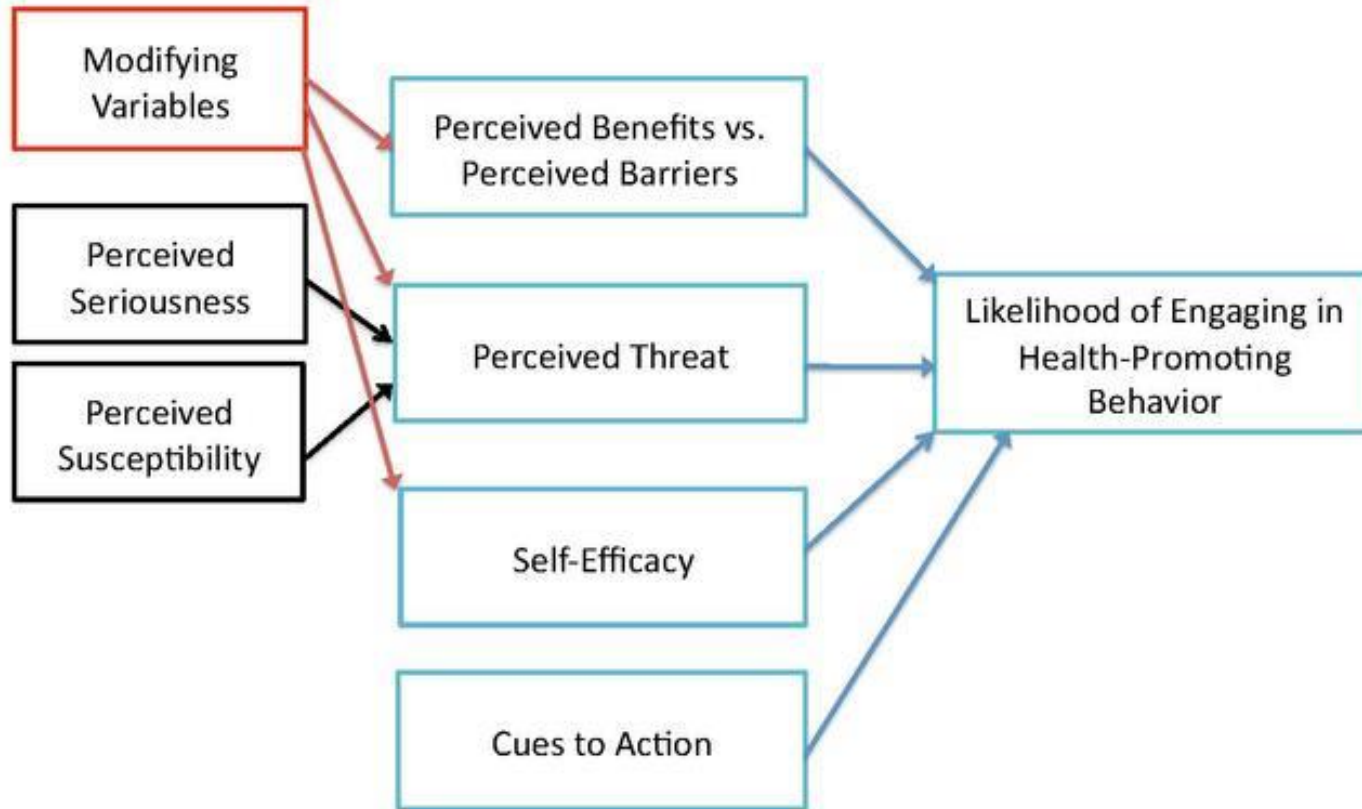
- Natural Environment

- ✦ Air and water quality,
- ✦ Toxic substances,
- ✦ Food borne pathogens,

- Built Environment

- ✦ Safety
- ✦ Walkable-bikeable communities
- ✦ Density

# The Health Belief Model



# Health and Illness



- **Demographic Factors**

- **Age:** the single most important predictor of illness and death
- **Sex**
- **Race**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Household composition**

# Health and Illness



- **Demographic Factors:**

- *Sex:* Women, on average, live longer than men.
- The gender gap in life expectancy has decreased since 1975.
- Women have more chronic diseases.
- Women are more likely to suffer from depression.

# Health and Illness



- **Demographic Factors**

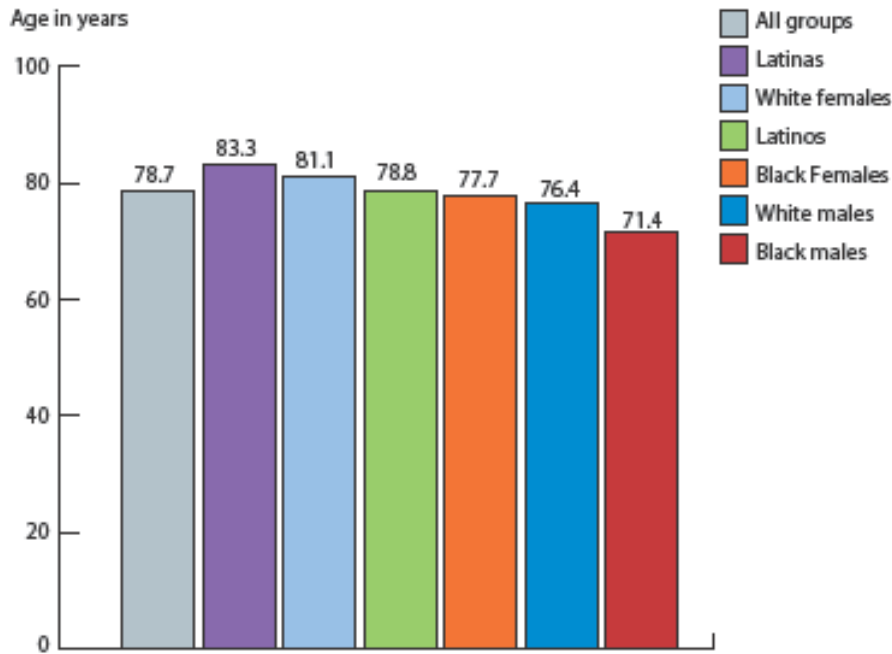
- *Race and Ethnicity:*

- **Infant mortality rate:** the number of deaths of infants (younger than 1 year) per 1,000 live births in a population
- The African American infant mortality rate is higher than for any other group.
- Latinos have higher life expectancy rates than African Americans and white males.

# Race, Ethnicity and Life Expectancy



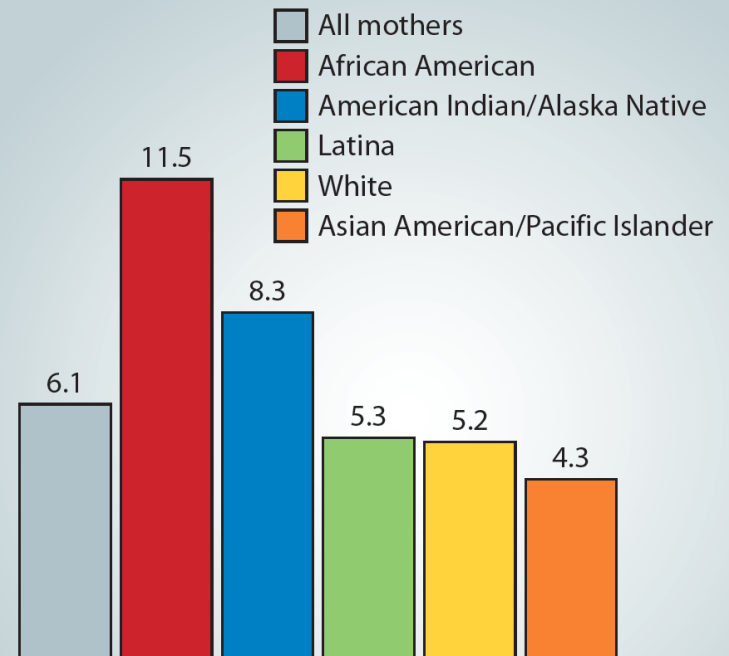
## U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth by Race, Ethnicity, and Sex, 2010



Note: Data is not available for 2010 American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian Islander populations due to reporting problems. In 2003, however, the life expectancy rates were the following: American Indian/Alaska Native males (67.4), females (74.2); Asian males (80.9), females (86.5) (National Institutes of Health 2006).

Source: Based on Murphy et al 2012, Table 6.

## Infant deaths per 1,000 live births



Source: Based on National Center for Health Statistics, 2014, Table 11.

# Health and Illness



- **Demographic Factors**

- *Social Class*: Higher SES provides resources that increase good health.
- People in lower classes are more likely to have jobs that endanger their lives.
  - ✦ <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/10-of-the-most-dangerous-jobs-in-the-u-s--191643548.html>

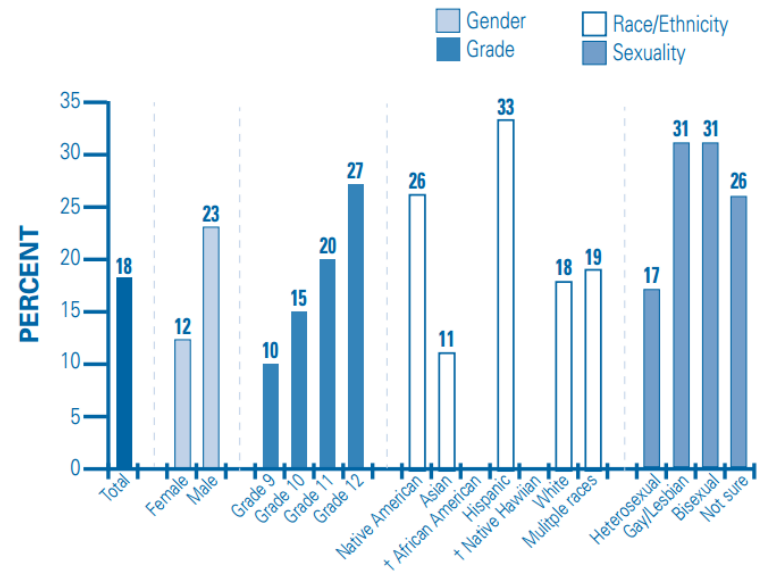
# Health and Illness



- **Lifestyle Factors**

- *Smoking:* Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability.
- Cigarette smoking by adolescents and adults has decreased but is still high.
- [Data on Smoking in Maine](http://www.tobaccofreemaine.org/explore_facts/Maine_facts_and_stats.php)  
[www.tobaccofreemaine.org/explore\\_facts/Maine\\_facts\\_and\\_stats.php](http://www.tobaccofreemaine.org/explore_facts/Maine_facts_and_stats.php)
- [High School Youth Risk Behavior-Example](#)

**Graph 2:** Percentage of Maine and US high school youth, grades 9-12, who used any tobacco\* on one or more of the past 30 days, by demographics, 2013

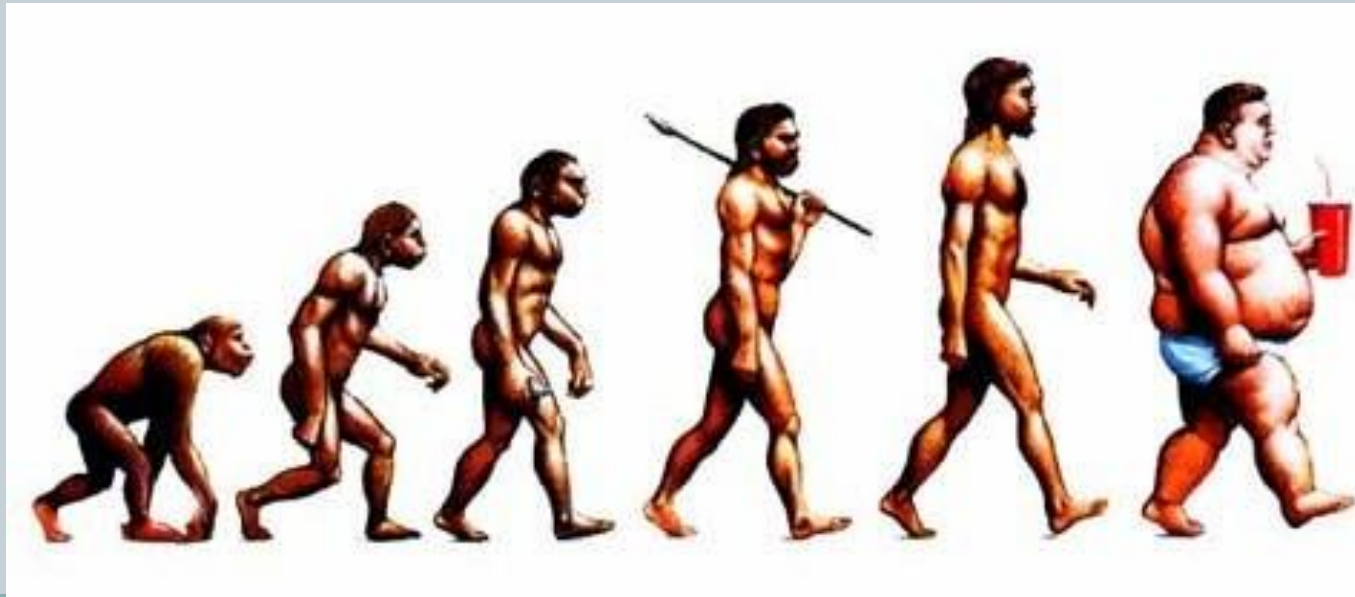


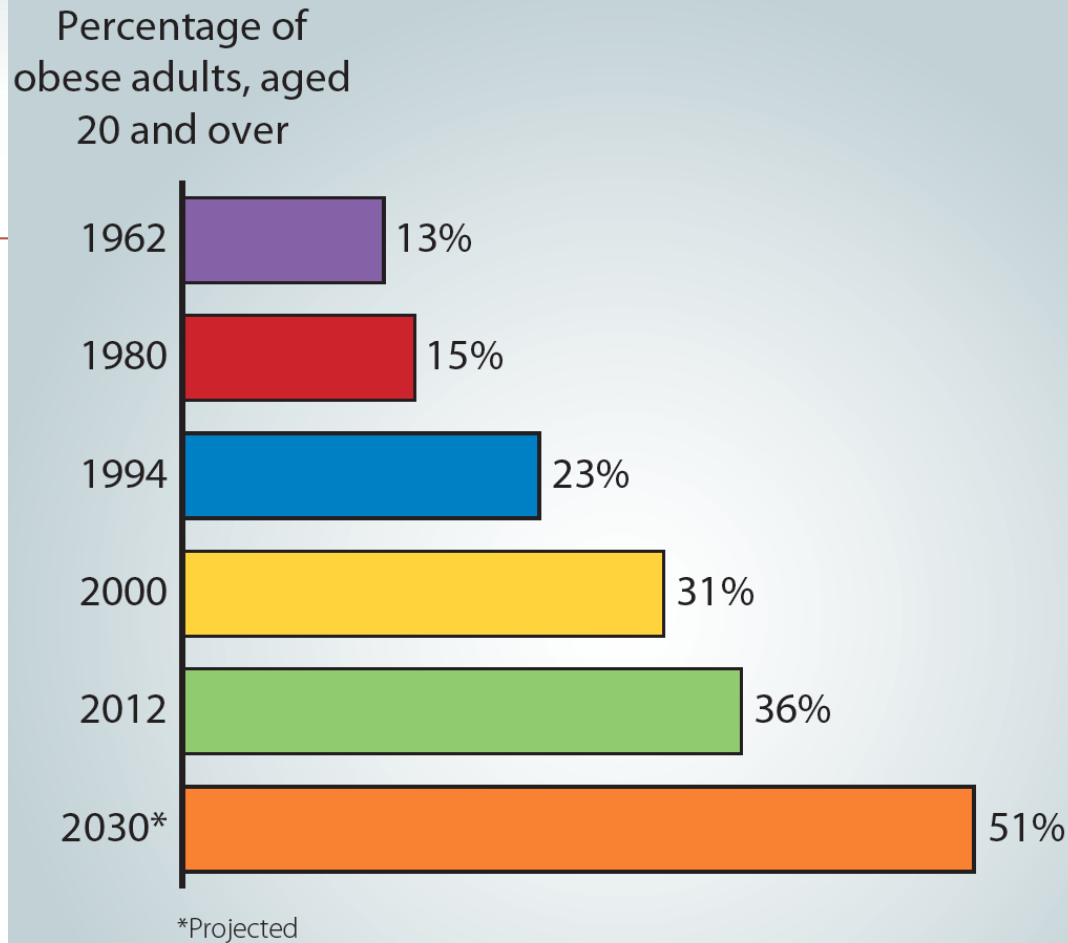
# Health and Illness



- **Lifestyle Factors**

- *Obesity*: 36 percent of adults and 17 percent of children are obese.
- Healthy eating can reduce people's risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer, and weight.



**Figure 14.4****U.S. Adults Keep Getting Fatter**

Sources: Based on Finkelstein et al., 2012, and National Center for Health Statistics, 2015, Table 64.

# Health and Illness



- **Lifestyle Factors**

- *Drug Abuse*: Excessive alcohol use and other drug abuse is the third leading lifestyle-related cause of death in the nation.
  - ✦ Illicit drug use is more common among men than women.
  - ✦ Illicit drugs and excessive alcohol use are related to many immediate and long-term health risks.
- *Tobacco* - Leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death
  - ✦ Higher among males than females
  - ✦ Prevention is difficult



# Health and Illness



- **Lifestyle Factors**

- *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*: People who engage in unprotected sex can transmit or contract one or more of 50 sexually transmitted diseases.
- HIV and genital herpes are incurable but these and other STDs can be treated if caught early.

# Health Care



- **Health Care:** any activity that improves a person's well-being
- **Medicine:** a system of individuals, organizations, and institutions that provide scientific diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness, injury, and other health impairments
- 17% of Americans had no health insurance in 2011.
- Least likely to be insured are Latinos and people with household incomes of less than \$25,000 per year.

# Health Care



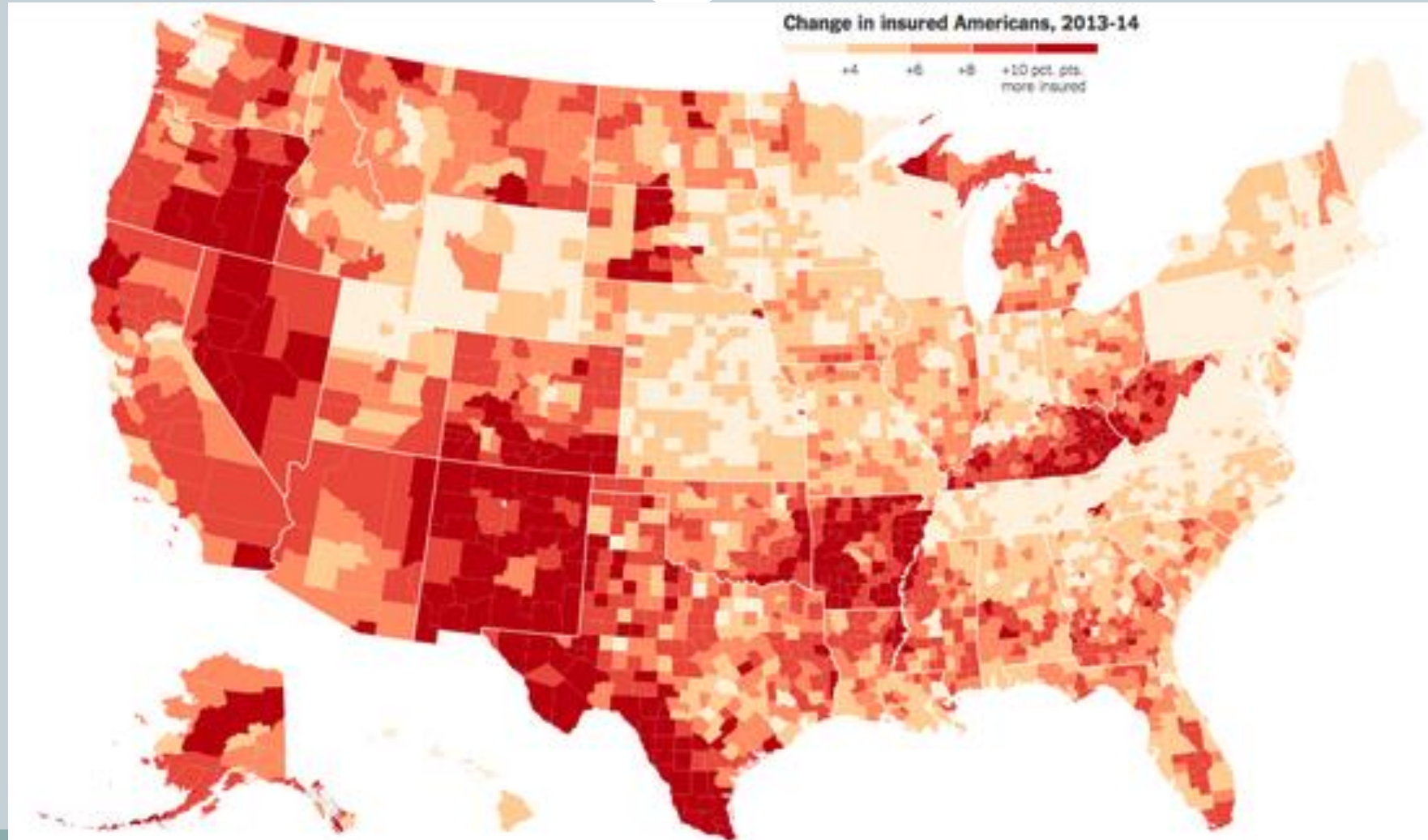
## Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2011

Percentage of Americans who receive health insurance from . . .

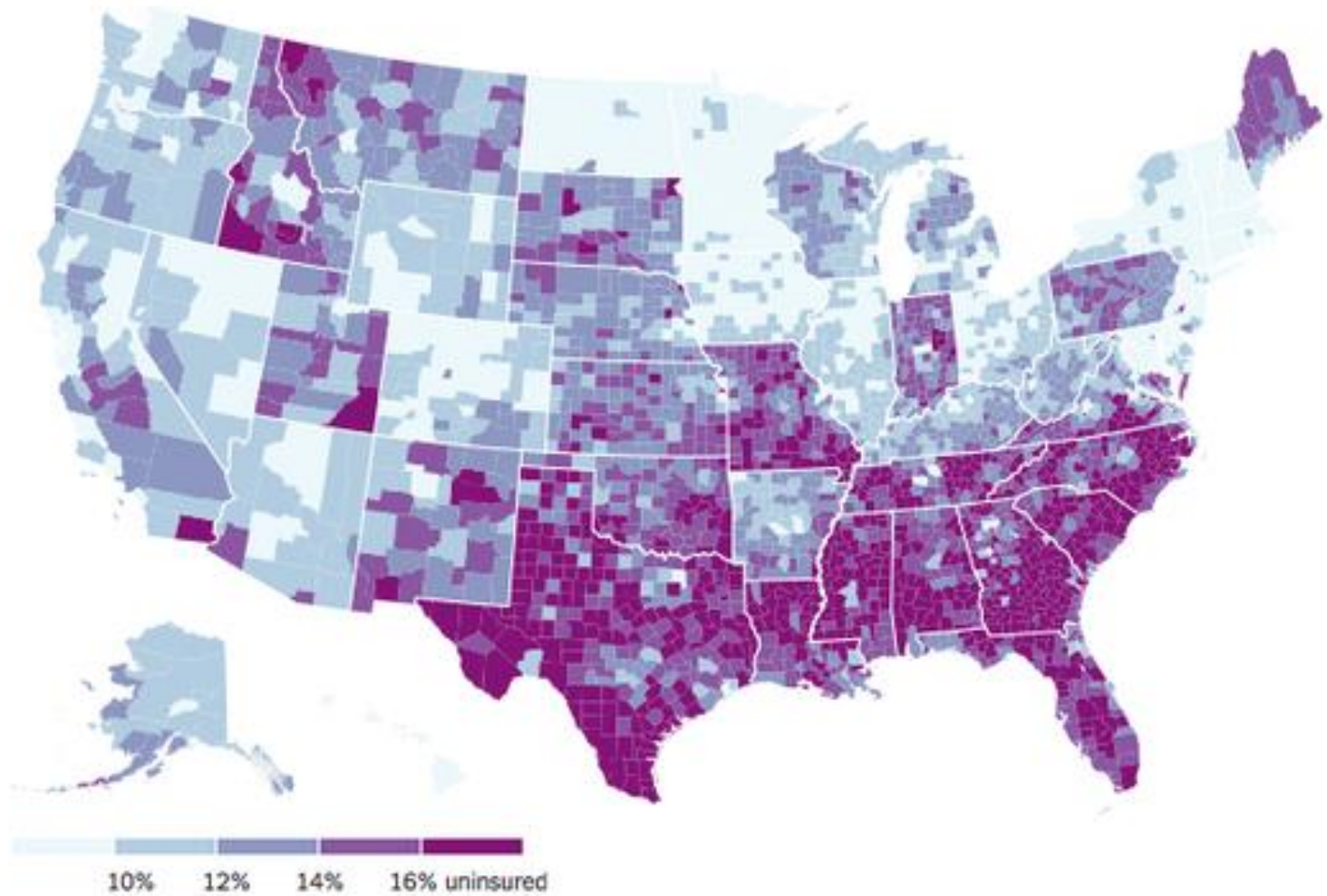
Employer-based programs	45
Government health insurance	25*
Other private health insurance	12
Not insured	17

\*Government health insurance includes Medicare, Medicaid, and military/veterans' benefits.

# Access to Health Care



## Who remains uninsured in 2014



# Health Care



- The United States spends more on health care than any other nation in the world.

But,

- we cover a smaller percentage of the total population and
- have poorer health outcomes.
- WHY?

# Health Care



- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) will be implemented by 2020.
- Key features of the law:
  - Prohibits health care insurers from denying coverage to children with a preexisting condition, imposing lifetime spending limits, and denying health claims without a chance to appeal.
  - Provides free preventive care
  - Allows young adults to be insured under their parents' policy
  - Requires people to purchase health insurance

# Perspectives on Health: Functionalists



For **functionalists**, good health and medicine are critical for a society's survival and stability.

- **Sick role:** a pattern of behavior accepted as appropriate for people who are ill.
  - The sick role is legitimate if it is short-lived.
    - ✦ Hypochondriasis
    - ✦ Malingering
  - Physicians verify the person's condition as sick or recovered.

# Perspectives on Health: Conflict



**Conflict theorists** - medicine and the health care industry benefit some groups more than others.

- The wealthy can afford health insurance and high-quality medical care.
- **Medical-industrial complex:** a network of business enterprises that influences medicine and health care.

# Perspectives on Health: Feminism



**Feminist scholars** address the health costs of being a woman, gender stratification in medicine and health care, and men's control over women's choices.

- Women live longer than men but are more likely to suffer from chronic illness.
- *Gender rating*: the practice of charging women more than men for identical health care plans

# Perspectives on Health: Symbolic Interactionists



**Symbolic interactionists** focus on how we define and construct views about health, illness, and medicine.

- Interactionists view illness as a social construction.
- Doctors sometimes diagnose disease differently because of the patient's age, sex, education.

# Perspectives on Health: Symbolic Interactionism



- Symbolic interactionists also look at **labeling and stigma**.
- **Medicalization:** a process that defines and treats a nonmedical condition or behavior as an illness requiring a medical solution.

# Perspectives on Health—Application



Which perspective fits each of the following statements?

- Normal behavior such as shyness has been turned into a medical problem.
- Male politicians decide what should happen to women's bodies.
- The medical-industrial complex is set up to benefit those who are already wealthy.



## KEY TERMS

- Health
- Social epidemiology
- Health care
- Disability
- Chronic diseases
- Acute diseases
- Alzheimer's disease
- Substance abuse
- Medicine
- Sick role
- Medical-industrial complex
- Medicalization

# SUMMARY

- Social epidemiology examines how societal factors affect the distribution of disease within a population
- Non-medical social determinants contribute to large health disparities in the U.S.
- Medicine is one of the important components of Health care
- Sociologists focus on different aspects of health, health care, and medicine

# Chapter Review



1. What is health?
2. What factors influence health and medical care?
3. Describe the conditions of health care in the United States and around the world.
4. Distinguish among the sociological perspectives on health and medicine.