JOIN US FOR A MOVIE!
SUNDAY, MARCH 15
Unnatural Causes
2:30–4:30 in St. Thomas’ Lighthouse

Segment 1 of the award-winning PBS series, “Unnatural Causes…is inequality making us sick?” explores the surprising factors that affect the health of Americans.

WHAT DETERMINES GOOD HEALTH?

What determines good health? Sound medical treatment? Genetics? According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), access and genes are much less significant in determining good health than status, class and privilege. So, can greater justice change the status of health care?

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Catholic Social Teaching involves itself directly with health and health care. In the Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform (1993) the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, “…We believe that health care should not depend on where people work, how much their parents earn, or where they live. Our call for health care reform is rooted in the biblical call to heal the sick and to serve ‘the least of these,’ the priorities of social justice, and the principle of the common good…”

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1. **How does American life expectancy compare to that of other countries?**

   A. In the top 5
   B. In the top 10
   C. In 20th place
   D. In 29th place

   **ANSWER:** D. American life expectancy is 77.9 years. We are tied with South Korea and Denmark for 29th place, despite being the second wealthiest country on the planet (by per capita GDP). Citizens of countries considerably poorer than ours, including Costa Rica, Chile and Greece, live longer on average than Americans.

2. **Where did the U.S. rank in life expectancy 50 years ago?**

   A. Number 1
   B. In the top 10
   C. In 20th place
   D. In 29th place
   E. In 30th place

   **ANSWER:** B. In the 1950s U.S. life expectancy was 68.2 years and longer than most other countries. But as the gap between the rich and poor widened in the U.S., especially in the 1980s, other industrialized countries rapidly passed the U.S. on many health indicators.
3. What is the greatest difference in life expectancy between counties in the U.S.?
   A. 4 years   C. 15 years   E. 33 years
   B. 7 years   D. 22 years

**ANSWER: C.** 15 years. Our ZIP code is a strong indicator of our health.

4. How much does the U.S. spend per person on health care compared to the combined average of other industrialized countries?
   A. \( \frac{3}{4} \) (75%) of the average
   B. The same
   C. 1 \( \frac{1}{2} \) times (150%)
   D. 2 \( \frac{1}{2} \) times
   E. 4 times

**ANSWER: D.** In 2004, the U.S. spent $6,102 per person on medical care—15.3% of our GDP and more than double the $2,552 median of 30 other industrialized nations. Why are our health outcomes among the worst in the industrialized world, even as medical costs escalate? One answer lies in how much nations invest in prevention, such as equitable living conditions.

5. On average, how many more supermarkets can be found in predominantly White neighborhoods compared to predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods?
   A. About the same
   B. 1.5 times as many
   C. 2 times as many
   D. 4 times as many
   E. 6 times as many

**ANSWER: D.** 4 times as many. Black and Latino neighborhoods have more fast food franchises and liquor stores, yet often lack stores that offer fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables. Residents tend to rely more on public transportation, further compounding problems of access. A 2005 Chicago study found that “food deserts” contributed to earlier and greater fatality related to diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure.

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**Climbing the Rungs of Health**

**Facts that Matter**

Fact 1: Social Status Matters for Health, from Birth to Death
Fact 2: Neighborhoods Matter
Fact 3: Employment Conditions Matter
Fact 4: Personal Behaviors Matter
Fact 5: Health Care Matters
Fact 6: Race Matters
Fact 7: Stress Matters