



## **Pt 2, Careers and Trends**

### **Accessing Health Care**



*Starr Stratford*

Growing up, my dad had a stable teaching job with state health benefits. And with my doctor/uncle living next door, my family had few run-ins with illness that couldn't be attended to by heading next door when Uncle Kim's Jeep pulled up in the driveway.

When I was five years old, I went into his small office for x-rays after breaking several bones in my right foot while jumping off the stairs at my best friend's house. I remember taking our family dog to the same x-ray machine when she broke her foot after underestimating the height of a cliff she jumped down.

Access to health care was never a big deal for me or our pets. It wasn't until years later, as I traveled with my family and witnessed poverty and poor health across several continents, that I was exposed to the privileged care I took for granted as a child. I realized that we have amazingly advanced technologies and health care here in the U.S. But it wasn't until years after my traveling experience, that I realized it wasn't my advantage as an American that provided my healthy life, but the fact that for me, and a fraction of the U.S. population, access to health care is relatively straightforward and an easily attainable commodity.

The uninsured, make up 16 percent of our nation's population, and as the number continues to grow, changes to the system feel imminent.<sup>1</sup> For the millions of Americans who live without health care, it is a big deal. The barriers are many and

varied. Walking through the complicated maze of our health care system is confusing at best, even for those who have insurance, speak English, and have the education to maneuver through the system. As health care costs continue to rise, as premiums continue to increase, and as small businesses find it increasingly difficult to provide employment-based insurance for their employees, we are on the precipice of change.

No Events