THE FRENCH HEALTH CARE system has achieved sudden notoriety since it was ranked No. 1 by the World Health Organiza-tion in 2000.1 Although the methodology used by this as- sess-ment has been criticized in the Journal and elsewhere,2–5 indi-cators of overall satisfaction and health status support the view that France’s health care system, while not the.

where there is too much ra-tioning, and the United States’ “competitive” system, where too many people have no health in-surance. This view, however, is tempered by more sober ana-

lysts who argue that excessive centralization of decisionmaking and chronic deficits incurred by French national health insurance (NHI) require significant reform.9,10 The American Health Care System Insured - Private (employer, individual) Insured - Public (Medicare, Medicaid) Uninsured Health Insurance (indemnity plans) 21% Managed Health Care 60% Physicians Hospitals Pharmaceuti cal drugs FinancePayorsInsurer-IntermediaryCare Delivery (private) voluntary Charity/cash – 7/12 % $ Tax cash Service and product Negotiation

5 Health Care Expenditures in 2002 - where the nation’s health dollar came from Source: Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2003. Total private – 54% Total public – 46% Total private – 54% Total public – 46%.