**Chapter 14: Health Care:**

**An Anatomy of Health and Illness**

**Web Exercises**

1. Statistical studies of our national health persistently show a gap in life expectancies between the rich and the poor. Write a report (including proper citations) that details the major social factors that would explain why rich people on average live about 8 years longer and are generally healthier than poor people. Some possible websites to begin your search:

[Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.hhs.gov/)

[National Institute on Aging](http://www.nia.nih.gov/)

1. Do a general search on "sociology of health." Write a report (including proper citations) that includes the kinds of topics that sociologists who study health might encounter, and use your findings to further elaborate on the statement in your textbook that "for the sociologist, the view of illness as only a physical disorder is too limited. A society's definitions influence who is considered sick and under what conditions. Illness, then, is in part socially constructed." Some possible places to search include:

[ASA Section on the Sociology of Medicine](http://www2.asanet.org/medicalsociology/)

[The Sociology of Health and Illness](http://fadelibrary.wordpress.com/2008/02/06/sociology-of-health-illness-january-2008-vol-30-issue-1/)

[The Internet Public Library](http://www.ipl.org/)

[Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com/)

Your college online library database

1. Read through the following website <http://ami-wa.org/> and answer the questions below:
2. How do sociologists explain the increase in the number of people in Western nations who are turning to alternative medical practices?
3. What do you see as the appeal of this medical approach?
4. How would a symbolic interactionist explain the following statement: “Alternative medical treatments are most effective for those patients who believe that they will work.”
5. The U.S. government recently conducted a major reform of health care focusing on many aspects of how Americans receive and pay for health care. Visit the website for this bill at <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/>. There you will find several resources including the lay, provisions, initiatives, and a timeline of changes. Explore all of these resources and learn about the health care bill. Discuss what aspects of health and health care are improved by the bill and what aspects are either not improved or harmed by the bill. In your opinion, how does this bill address the health care needs of Americans?
6. While at the American Medical Association’s website, visit their mission section and read their mission statement at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-mission.shtml>. Also consider reading their Strategic Issues for the year and the summary of their Annual Report for the prior year. After reading these resources, assess whether you believe physicians and patients have the same goals and interests surrounding health and health care. Be able to support your opinion.
7. Visit the homepage for the Virtual Psychology Classroom at <http://allpsych.com/disorders/disorders_dsmIVcodes.html>. Conduct a search of illnesses such as gambling, alcoholism, social disorders, nightmare disorder, and so forth. Write a paragraph on each of the conditions you choose, focusing on the social aspect of each diagnosis. How can these illnesses be understood from a sociological point of view? How has the medicalization of such issues changed public response to them?
8. Read about the facts regarding Obamacare here, <http://obamacarefacts.com/>. What is Obamacare? What is the minimum essential coverage? Write a few paragraphs analyzing the pros and cons of this plan as outlined on the website. What do you think about the plan?