

# COLOMBIA: IN FOCUS

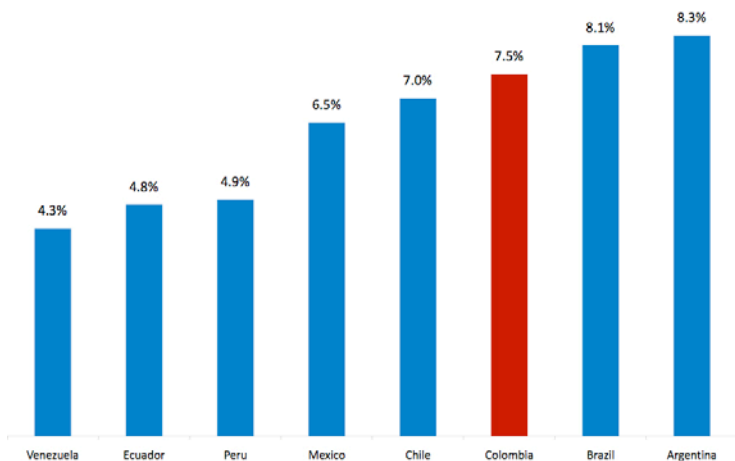
A WEEKLY UPDATE FROM THE EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA

July 22, 2009

## Did You Know...

### Colombia is a Leading Investor in Its Health Care System

Health care Spending as percentage of GDP (2007)



Showing a commitment to the health and wellbeing of its citizens, Colombia ranks **fourth in the world and third in Latin America** for investments in health care and medicine as a percentage of its gross domestic product (GDP).

The government's increased spending and expansion of coverage illustrate its commitment to health care.

Over the past 20 years, Colombia has nearly **doubled** the percentage of the population with health care coverage. Nearly **95 percent** of residents in the country's largest cities enjoy coverage.

## Inside Colombia

### Colombians Have Made Significant Contributions to the Field of Medicine

Modern medicine owes a number of important discoveries and medical advances to Colombian innovators.

Colombian pathologist Dr. Manuel Elkin Patarroyo developed the first synthetic vaccine for malaria, one of the world's most common infectious diseases, which causes more than 300 million illnesses and one million deaths each year.

Other medical contributions credited to Colombians include contact lenses for infants and the Hakim valve, a hydrodynamic system used by neurosurgeons.

Today, Colombia continues to be a leader in the field of medicine. Colombia currently ranks number one in the world for refractive eye surgery, a procedure that helps to decrease and eliminate dependency on glasses and contacts.



Photo: Dr. Manuel Elkin Patarroyo

## What's News

### Celebrations of Colombian Independence Day Take Place Around the World

Monday, July 20, marked Colombia's Independence Day – the anniversary of the day Colombia declared its independence from Spain in 1810. Nearly two hundred years later, Colombians around the world celebrated this important day in the country's history with a variety of concerts, parades and other festivities.

**Get to know Colombia.**  
Learn more at [www.colombiaemb.org](http://www.colombiaemb.org).