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Universal Healthcare: Why It Should Exist

Universal Healthcare; a very controversial topic. In my personal opinion, healthcare is a human right and not a privilege. But do Americans even deserve affordable or even free healthcare? How far should Universal Healthcare expand? Should Universal Healthcare be for everyone or just those who suffer from poverty? How will Universal Healthcare be paid for? And how have other countries succeeded with Universal Healthcare? These are some of the questions I think of when I think of Universal Healthcare. Some of them being worldly questions, I am going to try my best to answer them.

So, do Americans deserve affordable or even free healthcare? I do not mean this in a sense of morality, but more in a sense of it being a right or a privilege. In my opinion, I believe that being able to see a doctor without being thrown into debt is a right. In today's society, it is unfortunately considered a privilege, as not everyone can afford it. I have seen it first-hand. Someone close to me had what someone would call an emotional/mental breakdown and had to be transported to the hospital. When at the hospital, they sat in a cold room filled with heavy plastic chairs and a single, small tv. This went on for 7 hours until a psychologist came to speak with them, determined they were not a harm to themselves or others and sent them on their way. No medication, no treatment, nothing. All of this cost $3,600, as they did not have health insurance. And now they must make a monthly payment of $82 per month or they will lose points on their credit rating. The transportation, time in the cold plastic filled room, and speaking to an expert in the field of mental health took a huge chunk of change from someone. Tell me, how does that help? Someone who has a history of mental illness goes to seek help, does not get said help, but instead gets slapped with a huge bill. I think that it would make someone's like even worse, having that nagging feeling of debt constantly nipping at their mind.

How far should the coverage expand? Should it be for everyone or just those that qualify? I think that it should be for everyone, not just those who fall under a certain financial bracket. It should be a right for everyone that requires it. The reason why people dislike the idea of free healthcare is because they think that people are going to abuse it. They'll go to the doctors for small things that can be treated at home, because the doctor's visit is free. Or that other people will wait to go to the doctor until it's too late because when they do go, everything will be free. The last huge reason of why some people do not want Universal Healthcare is because there is a potential it could put an end to private healthcare, like the healthcare of a private hospital or faith-based organizations.

How will Universal Healthcare be paid for? I think this is probably the most concerning question. How does a government afford to pay for healthcare for 331 million people? Some Democrats in the US government have suggested taxing the rich. Some people interpret this as the rich being the top 1% of the country. This includes the millionaires and even billionaires. Other people interpret it as raising the taxes for people who make over $400,000 a year. Another way it could be paid for is reevaluating what the US spends money on. The United States budget is divided into 3 parts: discretionary, mandatory, and interest on the national debt. Discretionary spending consists of things like the Military, Education,

Transportation, Energy and Environment and Medicare. Mandatory spending consists of Social Security, Unemployment and labor, Veterans benefits and Food and Agriculture. Just the Military alone gets $598.49 billion dollars. Even if we take just a small fraction of that money, it could be used towards Universal Healthcare. The budget could even be comprised of multiple ideas. It could be from taxing the rich AND rerouting some of the government spending.

How have other countries succeeded with Universal Healthcare? Let's take Canada for example, who has a universal healthcare system called Medicare. This program allows Canada to spent less per capita on healthcare than the United States. Their statistics around things like life expectancy, obesity rates, infant mortality, and amenable mortality (which means deaths that could have been avoided if medical attention were sought out) perform better than those of the United States.

Of course, the concept of Universal Healthcare isn't perfect. There are cons, and some people may say that they outweigh the pros. Some cons of universal healthcare are long waiting periods, and it's of course expensive. With universal healthcare, the entirety of a country can go to the doctors when needed, and this could potentially cause the healthcare system to become overloaded with patients. It could also be made worse if the country has a high population. This could cause those with chronic medical conditions to be put on a waiting list. They could potentially become sicker, and in the end might succumb to their illness. The other con is that it is going to be expensive. And not new car expensive, or college tuition expensive, but other worldly expensive. Bernie Sanders, a Senator from Vermont, have preached about Universal Healthcare for a long time. The estimated cost of Universal Healthcare in his proposal was $30-$40 trillion dollars over a 10-year period.

It would certainly raise the federal budget but an astronomical amount. But we as a country should decide that this is something worth spending money on. I believe that we could get it done. Between rerouting government funding, to taxing the rich, to maybe even in some cases receiving donations from top one percenters like Jeff Bezos, we could swing it. Even though it might cause lengthy waiting lists, it's still a start. Who's to say those people wouldn't have died anyway because they did not have health insurance. At least being put on a waiting list gives them hope. And yeah it might be really expensive, but who are we to value the governmental budget over the lives of Americans? In my opinion, healthcare should be a right and not a privilege. Being able to see a doctor without being thrown into debt should be a national right that everyone deserves.

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