

Policy Analysis Brief

SWK555/SWK355: Social Welfare
Policy and Services

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Goal Statement

Attainment of the greatest available health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being, regardless of race, religion, political beliefs, or socioeconomic situation. During the pandemic, there was a slight increase of individuals being able to obtain health care and receive mental health services. On average in the United States, one of every five adults has to cope with a mental illness. During the Covid 19 pandemic, a spike in the demand for quality health care was much needed to help individuals get access to vaccines, mental health providers, medical equipment, and even obtain Medicaid insurance for those who qualified. Hundreds of thousands of Americans with significant mental diseases, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, have been sentenced to lives of extreme instability across the country. There is a tremendous urgency to address the mental health concerns. This includes a need to cooperate as a community to take care of ourselves and each other by incorporating resilience strategies into our everyday lives. There are many other illnesses that can be untreated and may end up deadly if a person doesn't have access to health care. Let's look into account a person who works more than 40 hours a week and has to decide between paying a monthly premium for insurance and putting food on the table to feed their family. Health care should be free and accessible in the United States and no family should have to put their health at risk. Imagine coming to a country to work and have a better life but your life

can be cut short because barriers in the health care system. The American health care system needs a revamping to create more low income accessible premiums for people and preventive care.

Scope of the problem

Few People are obtaining proper psychiatric care or psychological assistance these days, either because their health insurance does not cover it, they do not have insurance at all, or wait lists are much too lengthy. When the waitlist are too lengthy there can be months without the client receiving a diagnosis or the possibility to get on a medication regime to treat their illness which means more people can be on the verge of conditions getting worse or even death can be a possibility. The COVID-19 pandemic made the mental health care situation even more challenging. Even with the Affordable Care Act ensuring children are more connected to coverage, the pandemic has exposed gaps: lack of broadband access, early intervention, assistance to LGBTQ+ youths, and more. “In 2020, there was a 24 percent increase in emergency room visits for mental health in 2020. Missing dosages, postponing refills, or taking less medicine than prescribed, difficulties paying or being unable to pay their medical expenditures can affect an individual’s emotional well-being and prescription. Perspective has to be taken in account for those who are chronically ill and have no way to access these due to loss of job or self-employment. The lack of access to care is a major crisis. In

NYC untreated mental health illness is a huge concern and it can be linked to homelessness. Mayor Adams announced a pathway to respond to the persistent crisis of people who have serious mental disorders who are left untreated and unsheltered on New York City's streets and subways which has caused an alarming rate throughout the five borough. Mayor Adams announced the deployment of new clinical co-response teams in New York City subways to respond to persons with major mental health difficulties, as well as expanded training for all emergency responders in collaboration with New York State to compassionately care for those in crisis. The health care crisis is very broad and it needs to be targeted by what is causing more harm to the population. The lack of care and undiagnosed mental health and other diseases can be harmful to the future of our population. Techniques for assessing, identifying, and diagnosing psychological symptoms will be critical as individuals seek therapy and answers to the pandemic's psychological aftermath. We must take into consideration statistics of those that do not have health insurance because their employment status, immigration status, or simply because they think that paying a health insurance money is not necessary. However, Health care is a big issue for individuals because the topic is so broad and you can take consideration in those affected by high medication prices as well. Some disadvantaged communities, in particular, are frequently disregarded in terms of social requirements. As a result, an increasing number of health care institutions are exploring collaborations with community-based groups.

Past Policy

The Mental Health Systems Act of 1980 was legislation passed by President Jimmy Carter in the United States that offered subsidies to community mental health facilities.

The majority of the statute was repealed by the United States Congress during the Ronald Reagan administration. In 2002 President Bush launched Health Center Growth initiative expanding community health centers for the underserved. In 2003, Medicare law establishes Health Savings Accounts, which allow people to save pre-tax cash for current and future medical bills and also a prescription drug benefit was created voluntarily under Medicare.

Other past policies for health care included the amendment of the Mental Health Parity act in 2008 ensure complete parity. When both physical and mental health illnesses are covered by the same health insurance policy, insurance companies must treat them equally.

Current Policy

The affordable care act was enacted in 2010 to make affordable health insurance to more people. This included extending the Medicaid program to include all people with incomes less than 138% of the federal poverty level; however, not all states have expanded their Medicaid programs. The law provides reimbursements and premiums tax credits to consumers with incomes ranging from 100% to 400% of the federal poverty threshold.

The Affordable Care Act is a huge step forward on the road to true health-care reform, and more will come after it.

Patients who were previously uninsured owing to prior diseases or low financial resources can now get inexpensive health plans through their state's insurance exchange under the Affordable Care Act. The affordable care act allows individuals to sign up for health insurance and pay premiums according to their pay. The affordable care act can protect you from a pre-existing health condition, preventive care, insurance plans can't discriminate based on sex, can't charge women more than men.

Proposed Solutions

These proposed solutions can help us bridge the gap in services. Policymakers can create a solution that focuses on creating neighborhood clinics where people can go receive preventive care including mental health services if they have no insurance. For example creating clinics with more free flu shots, clinics with mental health providers on site that offer therapy services and open groups for people to come in whenever they please. The system will include developing statistics on underserved neighborhoods and creating hubs to bring the community together with a local drive that focuses on healthcare.

Incentives for individuals who sign up for health insurance should also be a topic.

Sometimes an individual doesn't see a benefit in seeing a doctor. Having local community event with a few physicians so they can greet themselves to the community they are serving and maybe adding physicians that are familiar with a neighbor can create

more people to have access to healthcare. Healthcare in other countries like Canada is free but in the United States where a large population of individuals are prone to cancer, diabetes, and heart stroke to name a few the level of care is totally different. The proposed solution on health care should also focus on post-partum depression and what resources in health care are provided to these mom to reduce symptoms of depression and improve their emotional well-being. When looking at health care we must target every vulnerable population and advocate for the needs of the underserved. Another example will be the homeless population that has a mental illness crisis. Those in crisis will be evaluated by skilled mental health specialists and removed from the community. Also we should require hospitals to notify recognized community clinicians when their patients are admitted or discharged, as well as coordinate with community providers in preparing patients for discharge. Numerous studies have demonstrated the value of telehealth treatment. Telehealth provides an immensely adaptable solution to access and affordability and has demonstrated high patient satisfaction due to its ease and accessibility to care. For next-generation care management models to succeed, analytics and predictive modeling must be used to proactively determine how, when, where and why to provide care. These models should be deployed quickly and broadly to the highest cost populations first, to start driving outcomes while engaging members more fully in their own care.

Health plans may improve member engagement and results by developing a solid data strategy, capturing insights through analytics, and integrating those insights to care

programs. They may make significant progress in the transition from illness treatment to prevention and health. Universal health care will make a healthier population due to everyone receiving the same level of care regardless of socioeconomic status.

Involvement of local communities

Local communities should offer Peer mentorship programs or volunteer opportunities that promote social involvement and inclusion for all persons. They should offer free health care eligibility tools for members and referral of members to free mental health counseling if insurance doesn't cover treatment. Extensive training to all physicians, outreach workers, and first responders in order to guarantee compassionate treatment, which may involve involuntary removals when working with people in distress who have serious mental disorders. Establishing ties with local providers of mental health care as well as other families and groups that serve the youth to assist in directing people and their families in need to access community resources and support. Empathy should be encouraged and expressed in your family, congregation, and community. Send a message of peace, acceptance, and compassion. Faith leaders should be able to act as advocates for families with no health insurance. Involvement with local communities also involves the district representatives. The United States has roughly about 30 million individuals without healthcare and we deserve a reliable and affordable healthcare system. Upon

doing my research one of the representatives who voted against every attempt to repeal the affordable care act was Nydia Velazquez who represents District 7 who continues to make sure that 24 million Americans have their health care and for defending healthcare as a fundamental human right.

Involvement of faith communities

In religious institutions and places of worship members should be provided with support groups and psychoeducational groups to help them. By proposing all faith leaders to be mandated and trained in mental health in topics as suicide and trauma so they can recognize the signs and learn how to respond to the members of their place of worship. Faith leaders can invite local mental health experts to their congregations and have mental health forums along with support from local Human resource administration and several health care agencies so members can apply for health insurance on the spot. This will help eliminate certain gaps in the communities with individuals not having health insurance. Faith communities are often a place where individuals go for long term guidance on dealing with everyday life issues. Individuals can go through despair and

negative thoughts which are often accompanied with a spiritual crisis and deep questioning about their purpose in life. Proposing mandated training for faith leaders can be a huge step in bridging the access to care. Also each place of worship should have a licensed clinician to help members deal with their crisis. It should also be a place for community gatherings and to offer additional resources to the individual and their family as needed. Holding monthly events and groups to promote more members to go to service and for members to recognize signs that no matter their religion they can get access to health care.

Key Organizations

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization's objective is to promote health and assist the vulnerable in order for the majority of people to have access to universal health care.

The Global Health Council

The group promotes global health awareness and legislation in the United States Congress.

Doctors of the world

Doctors of the World is a non-profit organization that maintains that healthcare is a basic human right.

Physicians for peace

Physicians for Peace is an international organization that teaches and trains healthcare personnel in underserved communities, therefore increasing their medical expertise.

These organizations continue to support and advocate the right to health care in different populations throughout the world. Organizations are needed in different populations to work with the underserved and in specific groups to target the different levels of accessibility to care. Organizations establish ethical principles increasing public health improvement. Organizations have shown the importance of healthcare during pandemic crisis.

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District 7 Representative Nydia Velazquez

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Dear Representative Velazquez,

Please accept this brief letter commending your advocacy for co-sponsor of the Affordable care act. I am currently a Master of Social Work Student at Alliance University who is interested in Universal Health care. The United States has roughly about 30 million individuals without healthcare and we deserve a reliable and affordable health care system. Upon doing my research I came across with your name as one of the representatives who voted against every attempt to repeal the affordable care act. Thank you for your efforts to make sure that 24 million Americans have their health care and for defending healthcare as a fundamental human right. Thank you for your continued efforts to secure insurance coverage with affordable quality care.

Sincerely,

Kiara Polanco

MSW Student at Alliance University

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