Universal Health Care
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History/ Background

• Debate First Began in Early 1880’s
• First compulsory sickness insurance began in Germany (1883)
• U.S. Gov’t left actions to states during the 1883-1912
  – States left it to private and voluntary programs
• 1906 American Association of Labor Legislation (AALL) led the first campaign for
  health insurance
  – AMA support (American Medical Association)
  – “Yours plans are so entirely in line with our own that we want to be of every
    possible assistance.” AMA to AALL secretary
History/ Background

• 1917 AMA House of Delegates disagreed on payment methods
  – Then denied that they had agreed with any of it at all
• American Federation of Labor opposed because it would weaken unions
• Other groups of opposition: Private Insurance Industry, doctors, labor unions, businesses
• In the 1930’s, focus shifted from stabilizing income to financing and expanding access to medical care
  – Health care costs began to rise
• The Committee on the Cost of Medical Care (CCMC) was funded by 8 philanthropic organizations. Over a 5-year period they published findings in 26 research volumes as well as 15 smaller reports supporting the need for medical care.

History/ Background

• Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) tried multiple times to have a Health Care plan be passed.
  – His 1st attempt was in 1935, however with the Great Depression there were other pressing issues that had more of a priority. (Social Security Benefits & Old age benefits)
  – His 2nd attempt the Wagner Bill, National Health Act of 1939 which lost steam in 1938 with the election and with WWII right around the corner.
• Truman’s presidency (1945-1953)
  – Healthcare was fully supported by Truman
  – He suggested a single health insurance plan for all citizens (regardless of class status)
History/ Background

- In 1958 a new plan was presented by a Rhode Island congressman to cover hospital costs for the aged on social security.
- The AMA countered with a voluntary “eldercare plan”
- From this debate came Medicare and Medicaid which was signed in 1965

Definitions

- Universal - available to all social classes
Argument For Universal Health Care

1. According to the Constitution, the government’s role is to protect the welfare of the people.
2. The intention of Universal Health Care is to promote the welfare of the people.
3. The Government’s role is to provide Universal Health Care.

Argument For

1. Universal Health Care provides more benefits to citizens.
2. Providing benefits increases happiness.
3. We ought to maximize happiness.
Argument For Universal Health Care

1. 2012 consumer reports, reported that paying for health care is the top financial problem for US households.
2. In 2012, the Kaiser Family Foundation stated that 26% of Americans struggled with medical bills due to the high cost.
3. According to families of all economic status', due to the cost of a simple doctor visit, over 58% of people delayed or forwent any type of medical treatment or attention.

4. A right to Universal Health Care would make medical services affordable and available to everyone.

Argument For

1. Humans have a right to life.
2. Having a right to life allows someone the right to prosper.
3. Having good health is a form of prospering.

4. Therefore Universal Health Care is a human right.
Argument For

1. Universal Health Care provides companies with worldwide competition.
2. Without providing employees with health care, companies could reduce their expenses.
3. By reducing expenses, companies can lower product costs and hire more people.

4. Therefore, Universal Health Care is beneficial for both employers and employees.

Argument Against Universal Health Care

1. Universal Health Care reduces the need for individuals to see doctors.
2. Reducing the need to seek medical attention reduces the income of hospitals.
3. With a lower income hospitals can reduce staff’s paychecks or reduce the number of people staffed.

4. Therefore, Universal Health Care will put individuals at risk of losing their job and cause hardship on individuals and their families.
Argument Against Universal Health Care

1. People generally have a set budget.
2. Being required to purchase health insurance increases the amount of cost for individuals.
3. By increasing an individual’s cost, it causes unnecessary stress.
4. Causing unnecessary stress is morally impermissible.

5. Therefore Universal Health Care is immoral and not justified.

Argument Against Universal Health Care

1. Patients are less likely to curb their doctor visits/prescription medication usage, making costs several times greater.
2. To lower government costs, prices of drugs, medical equipment and services could increase; curbing the incentive to put money into research and development.
3. Health care equipment and services could be rationed creating the power of politics to decide ‘who gets what’

4. The availability of Universal Health Care would be overused causing an inflation of costs for access to medical equipment.
Questions

- Do you agree with the Government forming laws for health insurance?
- What do you think of the idea of Universal Health Care?
- Any suggestions on how we could improve prospect of Universal Health Care?
- Would the impact of universal health care deter someone from entering the medical field?
- How would you expect the government to come up with the money to fund a Universal Health Care system?
- If health care was considered ‘free’ would you visit the doctor more often?

Sources

- US Constitution