

Determining the Characteristics Needed for a Universal Healthcare System in the United States

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Purpose and Importance

- Purpose: Determine the essential characteristics needed for a universal healthcare system in the U.S.
- Why important?
 - U.S. moving from market to more government intervention and provision with Affordable Care Act
 - ACA survived attempts to sabotage it
 - American Attitudes Changing
 - Polling shows less resistance to government
 - More acceptance of Medicare and Veterans Administration
 - Medicare for All taken seriously in political arena

Definition of universal healthcare and approaches

- World Health Organization definition has three components
 - Ensure access for all
 - Sufficient quality
 - Users not exposed to financial hardships

Two Approaches Applied to Discover Characteristics

1. Examine models and select characteristics
2. Examine rankings and select best system

Rankings approach reveals two findings

Highly ranked systems meeting WHO definition vary in many characteristics

- The U.S. as a market system is an outlier in world rankings and does not, cannot, meet WHO definition

Findings from Models Approach

- Congress must enact law to ensure right to healthcare
- Embedding right to healthcare as Constitutional Amendment difficult but ensures long term stability and avoids sabotage (like ACA)
- Using state-based model, i.e. state by state, will only perpetuate existing fragmented, uncoordinated, and costly system

Key Characteristic: Single Payer

- Dominant feature from examining models and rankings is Single Payer.
- Ensures ability for government to control the access to care, quality of care, and ensure no financial hardship on users
- Single payer ensures ability to control prices, determine reimbursement, and decide mix of government and private providers

Service Delivery

- Providers can be mix of government and private providers and still meet WHO criteria
- No dominant optimum mix among high ranking systems
- Factors affecting mix of government and private providers
 - Attitude toward government
 - More cost savings with government
 - Maintaining and gradually adjusting existing user/provider relations

Conclusion and Summary

- Single payer is the key characteristic
- Must move from market to single payer
- Congress must enact right to healthcare as law
- Ideally embed right to healthcare as Constitutional Amendment for long term stability
- Service delivery can be mix of private and government providers

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