

Examine the  
consequences of the  
establishment of a  
system of universal  
health care...



Universal Healthcare For many liberals in the United States, the establishment of a system of universal health care is a long held dream. They believe that America is an inherently unequal country because of this deficit, and that healthcare is a right that must be granted to all people. The recent passage of the Obamacare bill goes some way to establishing a system of universal healthcare, but it is also representative of many of the challenges that face those who would like to see this policy implemented. Obama has said that he believes healthcare is a right, and his policies are trying to ensure that this is recognized in law (Sherrow, 32). Nevertheless, there are difficulties ahead. There are two ways to implement a program of universal healthcare. The first is to have the government pay for all necessary healthcare expenses as is done in Canada. This is sometimes called the single payer method. Healthcare is centrally rationed and is available to all by dint of citizenship or residency. This is a good method of delivering the service—even if it is very expensive—but it is hard to implement in a highly developed economy such as the United States'. The second method is to force insurance companies to insure everyone. Normally, insurers don't like people who have preexisting conditions which make them risky. The government can create laws that force them to offer insurance anyway. Usually, the insurers will receive a subsidy to help them out. Before Obamacare passed, many liberals sought a pure public option. But is a public option such a great step forward? With the cost of healthcare rapidly accelerating, it may be too taxing for many countries to implement. Even in Canada, there is an increasing movement towards private clinics (Kraus). In Switzerland, a country which was closely studied by proponents of Obamacare, the single payer option is eschewed: “

Swiss private insurers are required to offer coverage to all citizens,  
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regardless of age or medical history. And those people, in turn, are obligated to buy health insurance" (Schwartz). The insurance option chosen by the architects of Obamacare seems to have been the best idea. It is clear that much of the future of this issue will involve political arguments. A sampling of the kind of rhetoric that so often dominates this debate goes something like this: " Conservatives have succeeded in making healthcare a commodity, a service bought and sold in the same manner as legal services. Those who can afford the best receive the best and the converse is also true. While this practice is consistent with capitalism, it is totally inconsistent with commonsense and common morality" (Raiford). Unfortunately, this kind of rhetoric is too common. The problem with the status quo is enormous (Kotlikoff, 2). We need to argue less, and work together more. Healthcare is an important part of all of our lives. We want to ensure that it is affordable and equitable. But these goals are difficult to achieve. They require a great deal of public policy work. The best method is the method chosen by the Obama administration. We must hope that it works as well in practice as it does in theory. Work consulted Kraus, Clifford. " As Canada's Slow-Motion Public Health System Falts, Private Medical Care Is Surging". New York Times. February, 26, 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/international/americas/26canada.html?ex=](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/international/americas/26canada.html?ex=1184644800&en=44cca772dc339429&ei=5070)

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