

Michael moore: sicko

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At its core, the traditional ideals of medical practise assumed the respect for all human life. This respect was manifested through the provision of medical care to anyone who needed it. Moore's film highlights how the US health care system appears to have lost this respect for human life as shown through the failings within the different arms of the healthcare system. This point is brought out strongly by one of the characters in the documentary who asks: what happened to "we are the healthcare that leaves no one behind"? In traditional medical practice there was a semblance to universal healthcare system funded and delivered by the governments in most countries. Pre 1900s doctors in the US were expected to provide free services to all their patients (PBS. org). This is one of the areas that "Sicko" exploits as a possible cause of the failings of the current American health care system. Moore juxtaposes the health maintenance organization (HMO) – led US health system to the socialised health systems in UK, France and Cuba. The core difference between the socialized healthcare systems and the US HMO-led system is seen in terms of delivery. HMOs are private for profit organizations which are expected to provide a return on investment to their shareholders. Basic economics tells us that the incentives for HMOs will therefore be to maximize revenues and minimize costs, if they are to be efficient. To do this HMOs have developed several guidelines that have over time reduced access to adequate health care for a large number of Americans. The documentary shows how HMOs are aggressively pursuing techniques to minimize their costs through: (1) setting of rigorous pre-qualification criteria that knocks the percentage of the population that would more likely be in need of greater medical care at a later age in their lives; (2) hiring medical reviewers whose job is specific job role is to deny patients

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medical care and; (3) hiring teams to scrutinize claims that have already been made with the aim to reclaiming their paid out monies. Another major point that “ Sicko” reveals about modern medical practices in comparison to the traditional is the former’s stronger inclination towards curative rather than preventive medical practices. With their huge financial resources, pharmaceutical companies have been successful in their lobbying for increased use of drugs from the government level to the HMOs. Moore informs us that there are up to four times more HMO and pharmaceutical company lobbyists than members of congress in Washington. HMOs and pharmaceutical firms clearly support each other in making the health sector in the US unaffordable and the population highly dependent on their services. This goes against the traditional spirit of medical care that sought to keep people healthy and away from hospitals. Moore indirectly contrasts the curative focus of the American healthcare system with the preventive healthcare system in France and Cuba. In France physicians are able to prescribe long recuperation periods for their patients while in the US physicians prescribe more drugs. Also we notice that the 9/11 heroes who went to Cuba are given less prescription in Cuba than what they were taking in the US. A highly successful preventive medicine campaign would most likely lower the market and margins for the pharmaceutical corporations. It is therefore not surprising that these large multinationals would lobby for curative medicine at the expense of preventive medicine. A third remarkable difference between traditional medical practices what Moore highlights is the behavior of medical practitioners. In the past the physician’s fundamental role was to see that his/her patients get cured. Sicko shows us how doctors’ roles have changed especially the US. In the US, as Dr. Linda Pino testified in <https://assignbuster.com/michael-moore-sicko/>

congress, HMOs hire some doctors whose primary duty is to use their medical expertise for the financial benefit of the insurer (Moore). In return the doctors are offered very lucrative financial incentives to keep them motivated towards denying patients medical care. In the past, medical doctors knew that they were getting into a profession that put them into contract with society. As such a doctor's role was closely allied to a sense of civic duty and a responsibility to shape their practice in response to the wellbeing of the society at large. However, the growth of consumerism, individualism and the corporation has had a big impact on the medical profession as well. In a highly capitalistic society like the US, doctors have also fallen into the social trend that encourages selfish accumulation of wealth at the expense of common good. The less individualistic societies have therefore been better able to preserve the traditional doctor's role in society such that the doctor gets motivated by seeing a healthier community rather than a wealthier wallet. To sum it all, " Sicko" reminds the American population that socialized medicine is not as bad as it has been portrayed. The HMO-mode of healthcare delivery needs to be re-thought and made more accessible especially to the underprivileged. Works Cited Moore, Michael. Sicko. Dog Eat Dog Films, 2007. Film. PBS. org. " PBS- Healthcare Crisis: Healthcare Timeline." 26 Oct. 2011. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.