

Homeless and access to healthcare term paper examples

[Health & Medicine](#), [Healthcare](#)



I.

While any aspect of homelessness presents problems to its victims, access to healthcare or more precisely, lack of access to healthcare is one of the most serious problems. Indeed, because homeless people are at an increased risk of getting sick, dying early and suffering from a number of health problems and illnesses; lack of access to healthcare make worse an already difficult situation (NHCHC, 2015). Barriers to access for the homeless range from lack of healthcare insurance to transportation issues to ignorance of support services. Despite these barriers, however, there are a number of programs and assistance services that seek to provide homeless people with easy and effective access to the healthcare system. For example, Mental Health America of Los Angeles, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing “all aspects of mental health and mental illness” offers a homeless assistance program focused on helping homeless people that suffer from mental illness find healthcare assistance (MHALA, 2008). Through the program, which covers Antelope Valley and Long Beach, offer a network of support centers where homeless people can “drop-in” for quick access to “treatment and medication” to help control symptoms of mental illness (MHALA, 2008). MHA is supported by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as the L. A. County Department of Mental Health. The Los Angeles Christian Health Center (LACHR) is another non-profit founded by the Los Angeles Mission that offers “comprehensive medical, dental and mental healthcare” services to the homeless populations of Skid Row and Boyle Heights areas of Los Angeles (NHCHC-LACHR, 2015). The LACHR not only has the facilities to provide on-site medical examinations and

treatments but can also provide clinic referrals to area hospitals. While the LACHR is supported by grants and donations, a large portion of its medical staff is made up of volunteer doctors, nurses and other medical professionals.

II.

As a fundamental player in the healthcare system, the knowledge, experience and ideas of nurses is crucial to helping inform public policy especially public policy that directly affects hospitals, patients, medical professionals and treatment (Nault, 2014). Accordingly, it is imperative that nurse actively participate in the shaping, enactment and implementation of public policy. Some current public policy areas that nurses need to consider getting involved include improving the workplace environment and implementing the Affordable Healthcare Act (ACA). As one of the largest personnel populations of the U. S. healthcare system, a workplace environment that is not only conducive to a nurse's responsibilities and duties but also respectful of the essential role that nurse play is important to achieve. One way to improve the workplace environment is by investing in nurses not only by providing more opportunities for nurses to work but also through properly staffing work shifts so that there are enough nurses to effectively cover the necessary work (Wakefield, 2013). Moreover, investing in nurse also includes providing nurses and nursing students with scholarships and loan repayment programs in return for health services provided to underserved communities (Wakefield, 2013). This has the benefit of attracting qualified people to becoming nurses as well as provided needed medical support for the community. Now that the U. S. Supreme Court has

confirmed, for the second time the legality of the ACA, it is time to ensure that it is effectively implemented. As the one of the key actors that will be involved in its implementation, nurses must not only understand how it affects their responsibilities to patients but also how it will benefit nurses as a profession. For example, the ACA's emphasis of expanding access to healthcare to most Americans means that healthcare professionals will be called on to work in communities, and with patients that they may have not dealt with in the past (Bear, 2012). Nurses that are interested in helping out can and should influence policymakers to change the laws and regulations that currently bar them from providing services that they have the skill and expertise in performing so that communities in need can get the services that are necessary (Bear, 2012).

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