

# Free health care for everybody

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“ The issue of universal coverage is not a matter of economics. Little more than 1% of GDP assigned to health could cover all. It is a matter of soul. ”

These were very encouraging words from Uwe Reinhardt, a well-known health economist from Princeton (Chua). It simply means that it is entirely possible for health coverage to become available to every American absolutely free of charge regardless of their economic status. That is, if the United States government is really serious in performing its duties of protecting the citizenry as mandated by law.

Unfortunately, the prevailing situation in the country today is far from ideal. As of 2005, 46.6 million people had no health insurance coverage. What was alarming was the fact that the uninsured Americans did not only come from the ranks of the unemployed and the underemployed - the figure also included those who were lucky enough to have regular employment. In fact in 2005, out of the 1.3 million Americans who joined the ranks of the uninsured, more than 500,000 were workers who had employer-sponsored health insurance in 2004.

This happened despite the fact that for the first time since 1999, the real median income of American households increased by 1.1%, and the rate of poverty stayed put at 12.6%. In other words, many working people found it hard to pay for health insurance despite getting pay increases (U. S. Census Bureau). What happens when these Americans who have no health insurance become ill and require medical care is not so difficult to imagine - many, if not most of them, die without even getting adequate medical assistance.

This deplorable situation prevailing in the wealthiest country on earth today only proves that the system of health care in the United States is breaking

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down. Majority of Americans blame the rising cost of health care in the country as the main cause why many people have chosen to go without the protection of any health insurance. This is because the cost of health care has been rising at a rate higher than the rate of increases in wages.

In fact “ health care spending rose 10 percent in 2001 and another 10 percent in 2002 - the largest jump in more than a decade. In the first six months of 2003, health care spending rose another 8.5 percent. ” (Working America, 2007) Faced with such a situation, more and more Americans are clamoring for a universal health care system which would cover all Americans regardless of their economic status. This is not at all impossible if we consider the following facts and figures.

As of 1999, the United States was the only remaining industrialized country in the world with no universal health care system - 28 countries had a single-payer universal health care while Germany had a multi-payer universal health care (Battista & McCabe). While the U. S. has no universal health care, the reason why millions of Americans have no health insurance coverage today, the country is spending more in health care per person. As of 2002, the U. S. spent \$5,267 for health care per person while the rest of the industrialized world which had universal health care systems spent so much less.

Canada, for instance, spent only \$2,931 per person, Germany, \$2,817, France, \$2,736, Australia, \$2,504, and the United Kingdom, \$2,160 per person (Anderson, G. F. , Hussey, P. S. , Frogner, B. K. , & Waters, H. R. ). Studies have also shown that a universal healthcare system would save the government precious dollars. Dr. Kenneth Thorpe reported for the National <https://assignbuster.com/free-health-care-for-everybody/>

Coalition for Health Care in 2005 that a government financed universal health care program would save the country a whopping \$1. 1 trillion in ten years (Chua).

Moreover, studies conducted by the “ Congressional Budget Office and the General Accounting Office” showed that as much as \$200 billion a year could be saved even if every uninsured American is covered, owing to a much lower administrative expenses (Battista & McCabe). Statistics support the argument that a universal health care that would cover all Americans regardless of their economic status is not only feasible but economically beneficial for the county. It is therefore time that the U. S. should adopt one.

#### Reference

[http://cthealth.server101.com/the\\_case\\_for\\_universal\\_health\\_care\\_in\\_the\\_united\\_states.htm](http://cthealth.server101.com/the_case_for_universal_health_care_in_the_united_states.htm)