

Equal health care for all: A philosopher's answer to a political question

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Should access to health care, especially in life-threatening situations, depend on whether you can afford it? Absolutely not, says Robert C. Hughes, Wharton professor of legal studies and business ethics, who compared health care systems in the U.K., Canada, and Australia. He writes about this question and other issues in a recent paper titled,

"Egalitarian Provision of Necessary Medical Treatment."

Hughes identifies two key features of an egalitarian health care system. First, he argues, it would protect people's liberty to ensure that access to money does not decide if people get the health care they need. Second, it would promote stability and encourage people to be law abiding. "The central finding of [my research] is that it's morally necessary to make sure that people's finances don't affect their ability to get truly medically necessary treatment," he says.

Hughes favors universal health care coverage in the U.S. Further, in order to ensure that everybody has access to the medical care they need, he says one option is to eliminate [private health insurance](#) for coverage provided under "Medicare for All," the solution that Democratic presidential candidates Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders have proposed. Hughes explores what legislators, the [pharmaceutical industry](#), and other [health care providers](#) could do to ensure a fair [health care](#) system where private parties don't get to decide who is eligible for what treatments.

More information: Robert C. Hughes. Egalitarian Provision of Necessary Medical Treatment, *The Journal of Ethics* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s10892-019-09309-y](#)

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