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Candace Balavage

balavagc@misericordia.edu

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Is Healthcare in the United States a Right or a Privilege?

Candace Balavage, Student Nurse

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare is a fundamental human good, because it affects our opportunity to pursue our life goals, reduces our pain and suffering, helps to prevent the premature loss of life, and provides information needed to plan our lives (American Medical Association, 2022).

The right to healthcare provides individuals access to health care, hospitals, safe drinking water, sanitation, food and housing. It provides people with a system of disease prevention, treatment and control with access to essential medicines (Kaufman, 2019).

SIGNIFICANCE

- In the U.S Population there is 400 million out of over 7.2 billion people in the world that lack the access to essential health services. That means that 6% of the U.S population does not have access to healthcare (O'Neill 2021)
- The percentage of adults 18 and older who were not able to obtain healthcare in the past year due to cost is 6.7% (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

POSITION STATEMENT

Healthcare is a right, not a privilege. Individuals deserve the right to preventive care and tertiary prevention for illnesses.

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

Our society has an obligation to make adequate care accessible and available to all of its members regardless of their ability to pay (American Medical Association, 2022).

Having the right to healthcare entitles everyone to be able to control and take responsibility for their health and body (World Health Organization, 2017).

Poor health can keep us from going to school or work, caring for our families, or participating in our communities. There is a responsibility of society to respect, protect and fulfill human rights obligations by providing rights to healthcare (Kaufman, 2019).

Not all individuals are born into conditions that support their best health. Without the right to healthcare their health outcomes will likely worsen over time (University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2020).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Having healthcare as a human right impacts nursing because as nurses we are a patient advocate (Loyola Chicago ABSN, 2021).

As nurses we protect human dignity, promote patient equality, and we provide freedom from suffering. Without healthcare nurses are not performing their job by advocating for healthcare as a human right and providing patients with all the things to ensure the access to healthcare.

As nurses we are able to prevent individuals from suffering or preventing their medical illnesses from getting worse (Loyola Chicago ABSN, 2021).

Nurses can stay aware of inequities in gaining access to healthcare and the different levels of care that are available to certain marginalized populations (University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2020).

By gaining knowledge and awareness nurses can be cognizant of health disparities and can better prepare to improve health conditions for their patients and their communities (University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Healthcare is a human right and not a privilege. Individuals should never wonder whether they will be provided the healthcare they need. By providing healthcare individuals can live a healthy free from disease life.

Everyone deserves to be free from suffering and have access to healthcare regardless of their socioeconomic status.



(Scott, 2020)

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