

Debate: Is Health Care a Right?
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Summation

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Our healthcare system is unfair, sometimes merciless. All other free market democracies have decided that health care is a right and provide protection to all their citizens from illness and suffering.

Why is declaring health care a right so hard for Americans? We are just as moral and generous as these other nations. We do not believe people should suffer or die from lack of money, but we also believe people should be responsible and self-reliant. We hate freeloaders. We do not want to create a worse situation by providing so much as a society that we undermine individual responsibility and initiative. The moral dilemma is understandable.

So recall the story of Heinz and that through the ages, moral principles have placed a higher premium on human life than personal property. Establishing health care as a right is essentially the same moral dilemma but at a whole society level – where each of us are simultaneously Heinz and Heinz’s wife and the druggist combined.

Beyond the moral arguments, people are naturally concerned with the economic implications. Ironically, the good news in this case is that morality pays off. Although every other industrialized nation certainly struggles to determine how much health care they can afford to provide, research consistently shows that these nations have better overall medical outcomes at about half the amount we pay. We consistently rank near or at the bottom on most measures compared to them because of our inequitable distribution of health care.

The best moral position, “yes, health care is a right” leads to better quality of care for less money – which means it isn’t much of a dilemma after all.

I refer you to our website www.healthcarefortexas.org for research-based data on this complicated issue.