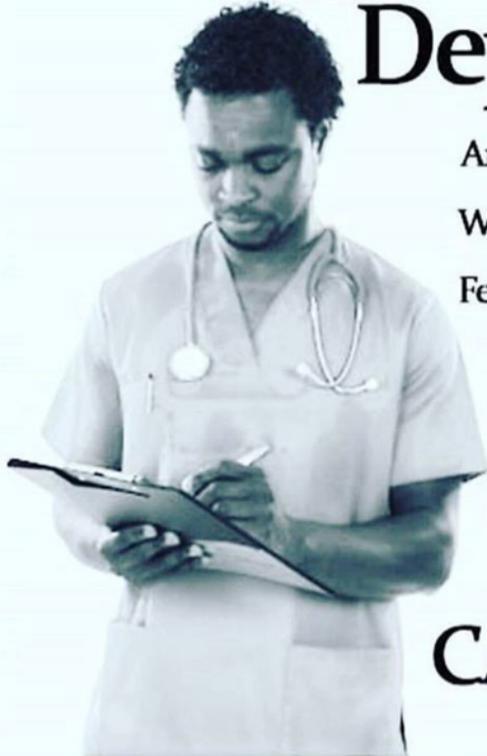


“You Say Socialist Like it’s A Bad Thing”

Exploring Universal Healthcare in the U.S.



**Feeling Sad and
Depressed?**

Are you anxious?
Worried about the future?
Feeling isolated and alone?

**You might
be suffering
from
CAPITALISM**

Symptoms may include: homelessness, unemployment, poverty, hunger, feelings of powerlessness, fear, apathy, boredom, cultural decay, loss of identity, extreme self-consciousness, loss of free speech, incarceration, suicidal or revolutionary thoughts, death.

Ask your local doctor, union or occupation about MayDay_U

1. One of the main advantages to implementing a single-payer healthcare system would be the U.S. being an overall healthier, happier, and more lucrative nation as a whole. We would have improved health outcomes due to the nature of a single-payer system being prevention-

focused and emphasizing primary care, which has been associated with overall better health outcomes versus specialty care (*Shi & Singh, 2010*). A prevention-focused healthcare model would incorporate more regular primary care physician check-ups and provide incentive for doctors to make their patients healthier, which would thereby reduce the overall incidence of illness, disease, and mortality. Prevention and screening would decrease the need for more elaborate and costlier treatment that is only necessary once the illness or disease has time to manifest. Universal access would also improve the health of lower and middle-income populations who contribute to the overall economy yet suffer from socioeconomic health disparities due to lack of access or finances means to meet their healthcare needs.

Another advantage to a single-payer NHI is that it would be more financially economical and would save time and money by avoiding the unnecessary administrative costs associated with third-party systems (insurance companies). Limiting the overutilization of technology through supply-side rationing and implementing a central governing agency would also save substantial costs (*Shi & Singh, 2010*). Although many argue that single-payer NIH might cause people to mooch off of the system, on the flipside it also might provide incentive for able-bodied individuals on government-sponsored healthcare such as Medicaid to seek employment. Many people on government-sponsored programs lack incentive for employment in fear of losing their healthcare because earning an income would put them “just above the poverty line” and disqualify them from receiving subsidized healthcare. Consequently, this forces people to choose between obtaining employment or healthcare, because much of the time their employers do not offer insurance or they are unable to afford the insurance that is being offered by their employer.

2. The main disadvantage to implementing a single-payer NHI system in the U.S. would be

the potential for it to exacerbate the existing shortage of primary care physicians which may result in significantly longer wait times- which are known to be problematic in countries like Canada and the U.K. The shortage of primary care physicians might be further compounded by the demographic transition, in which the growing elderly population and declining birth rate are predicted to present great challenges that will overburden the healthcare systems of most developed nations today. Moreover, the nature of the treatment needed (specialized geriatrics) for the elderly and aging population may require more costly and technologically-innovative treatment than socialized healthcare can offer. There is also the possibility of individuals posing a moral hazard in terms of misuse or overutilization since they don't have to pay for their healthcare, which can also tax and unnecessarily burden the health care system. Lastly, the pay reduction might reduce the overall attraction to the practice, potentially leading to an increased shortage of physicians or decreased quality of care- unless there is a stronger monetary incentive (*Formosa Post*, 2017).

Another possible disadvantage of a single-payer system would be a subsequent weakening or decrease in other areas (economy, job market, reduced competition/innovation) and an increase in taxes and national debt. While a single-payer healthcare system could save much of the costs associated with healthcare, the opposite could also hold true given that the U.S. healthcare system comprises “many players” and much of the revenue is generated from these high healthcare costs. Furthermore, in order for a health care system to be run and financed efficiently, the government might have to inevitably cut other areas in order to compensate for the increasing demand of healthcare needs in aging populations (*Formosa Post*, 2017). Moreover, not all of the “players” are the Big Fish, but the little fishes (aka working-class people) such as the receptionist working the 9-5 grind at a large insurance firm answering phones

all day for minimum wage. Large insurance companies, for example, would have to be remodeled to fit the single-payer system or be eliminated all together, which would result in job and economic losses for many middle-class employees.

3. The three biggest barriers would essentially be those who essentially finance, control, and support the current healthcare system such as:

1. The most powerful and wealthy top 1-10% of the population such as Trump, Big Pharma, Monsanto, far left politicians, and other powerful interest groups. These groups essentially hold the breadth of the wealth, and consequently dictate how healthcare is spent and distributed amongst the population. Without their support, enacting a single-payer NHI in the U.S. is nearly impossible.
2. I predict that specialty physicians, insurance companies, and those who affiliated with R&D of medical technology would also be very much against universal healthcare for the simple reason that they would take a massive pay cut through a single-payer system and their job demand would significantly decrease. Specialty physicians and insurance companies work together to drive up costs through third-party administrative expenses, and the utilization of advanced new medical technologies further escalate healthcare costs.
3. Overcoming entrenched cultural beliefs and values held by many Americans such as: the tendency to use the technological incentive in which more technology is falsely equated with 'better', overall distrust for government and blind faith in political parties, and overall negative views of Socialism. The Americans against single-payer system could be divided into two groups: those who are satisfied with the status quo, and those who are too ignorant to see the difference (aka people in rural Midwest states that are unbeknownst voting for a political party

that is not in their best interest but continue to hold an undying sense of Patriarchal “loyalty”).

The three biggest supporters in enacting single-payer NHI in the U.S. would be:

1. Bernie Sanders; one of the few politicians, if not the only, who truly advocated for human rights across all groups and preached that every U.S. citizen should be given the natural birthright to healthcare. While many Americans saw Sanders’ radical ideology on healthcare as “radical socialism”, Sanders’ ideology is synonymous with that of all the other nations in the world that do have a single-payer system in place for their citizens (all nations except the U.S). Unfortunately, I think many Americans were just not mentally (and culturally) capable of fully grasping this concept due to pluralistic ignorance and cognitive dissonance.
2. Minority groups, marginalized populations, and lower middle-income people, and other populations who are the most negatively affected by the current healthcare in place- or lack thereof would likely advocate for a single-payer system. Populations such as these would widely support and benefit the most from this type of healthcare because they are characterized as having the most need, with the least ability to pay for or access health care services (*Frieden, 2015*).
3. Educated liberals (especially on the East and West coasts) would also be more likely to support a single-payer NHI system as they are more likely to be politically informed, making them less susceptible to forming an opinion based off of biased news sources, media, and corrupt politicians who use strategic narratives to persuade less-educated populations. Educated people are statistically more likely to be democratic, and democrats are more likely to support universal healthcare than conservatives.
4. Given the sheer fact that we have the worst health all the industrialized nations despite spending the most on healthcare, is enough of an indication that the U.S. healthcare system needs

an entire reformation. Although I would support the establishment of a single-payer healthcare NHI system in the U.S., the reality of one being implemented system is becoming increasingly unrealistic- especially regarding the current political atmosphere. I think socialized medicine would be the first step towards bringing people together in terms of closing the severe socioeconomic gaps amongst the diverse groups of populations, and perhaps alleviate some political disparities between Democrats and Republicans. The right to adequate healthcare is one of the few things that the majority of working-class people on *both* parties should be able to agree on, which is perhaps why the “Trumpcare” bill is struggling to get passed. I think the most viable strategy for the U.S. would be implementing a dual healthcare system in which people are given the choice to pay privately, but every citizen is entitled to receiving free healthcare to meet their basic overall healthcare needs.

The people who would most lose out by the implantation of socialized healthcare would be the groups who would suffer much less than the greater majority Americans who cannot even get their basic health care needs met because of inaccessibility and cost, are working at a job just for health insurance, etc. Sacrificing a few for the greater good of society is the essence of Socialism- but also runs contrary to the traditional American ideals and Capitalistic values that the U.S. was founded on and what differentiates us from other industrialized nations. Capitalism essentially teaches us how to be selfish and forgo the greater good of thy neighbor, which is not something that our ancestors, or even Jesus Christ for that matter, would probably recommend. If we survive the next four years, maybe then Americans will finally realize the benefit of implementing a single payer NIH in the U.S.

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