I affirm.

My Value is Morality

First, rationality is key to morality. Korsgaard[[1]](#footnote-2):

What all of this means is that **[R]ationality**, for Kant, **is the capacity for normative self-government. Rationality makes us capable of assessing and judging the principles that govern our beliefs and actions, and of regulating our beliefs and actions in accordance with those judgments.** Rationality also makes it necessary for us to exercise this capacity, for **[A]s long as we are conscious of our principles,** to some extent **we cannot help but assess them. Once they are before our minds, we must decide whether to endorse or reject them, and act accordingly**.

Next, universal laws determine moral duty. Johnson:

**Kant's first formulation of the CI states that you are to “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.”** (G 4:421) O'Neill (1975, 1989) and Rawls (1989, 1999), among others, take this formulation in effect to summarize a decision procedure for moral reasoning, and I will follow them: **First, formulate a maxim that enshrines your reason for acting as you propose. Second, recast that maxim as a universal law of nature governing all rational agents**, and **so as holding that all must**, by natural law, **act as you yourself propose to act in these circumstances. Third, consider whether your maxim is even conceivable in a world governed by this law of nature. If it is, then, fourth, ask yourself whether you would, or could, rationally will to act on your maxim in such a world. If you could, then your action is morally permissible.** If your maxim fails the third step, you have a ‘perfect’ duty admitting “of no exception in favor of inclination” to refrain from acting on it. (G 4:421) If your maxim fails the fourth step, you have an ‘imperfect’ duty requiring you to pursue a policy that can admit of such exceptions. If your maxim passes all four steps, only then is acting on it morally permissible. Following Hill (1992), we can understand the difference in duties as formal: Perfect duties come in the form ‘One must never (or always) φ to the fullest extent possible in C’, while imperfect duties, since they enjoin the pursuit of an end, come in the form ‘One must sometimes and to some extent φ in C’. So, for instance, Kant held that the maxim of committing suicide to avoid future unhappiness did not pass the third step, the contradiction in conception test. Hence, one is forbidden to act on the maxim of committing suicide to avoid unhappiness. By contrast, the maxim of refusing to assist others in pursuit of their projects passes the contradiction in conception test, but fails the contradiction in the will test. Hence, we have a duty to sometimes and to some extent aid and assist others.[[2]](#footnote-3)

If you would not will an action as a universal law, then that action is not morally permissible. One should act only according to what can be universal laws because only universal laws give us a moral duty. Something not universalizable wouldn’t be sufficient for moral command.

Thus my standard is being consistent with universal law.   
Since human rationality serves as the basis for normative claims, anything that is asserted to be a maxim must be universalizable, meaning that it is possible for every rational being to will the maxim. If a maxim is impossible for all agents to will, then it can’t be a moral maxim at all since the point of morality is to guide action for all rational beings. There is no reason to reject a maxim for one person while making it sufficient to guide the actions of another.

I observe:

1. Intent rather than result matters.

* 1. The only relevant thing to the morality of an action is a good will. Johnson 2: In Kant’s terms, **a good will is a will whose decisions are wholly determined by moral demands** or as he often refers to this, by the Moral Law. **Human beings view this** Law **as a constraint on their desires, and hence a will in which the [moral demand] is decisive is motivated by the thought of duty.** A holy or divine will, if it exists, though good, would not be good because it is motivated by thoughts of duty. A holy will would be entirely free from desires that might operate independently from morality. **It is the presence of desires that could operate independently of moral demands that makes goodness in human beings a constraint**, an essential element of the idea of ‘duty’. So **[I]n analyzing unqualified goodness as it occurs in imperfectly rational creatures such as ourselves, we are investigating the idea of being motivated by the thought that we are constrained to act in certain ways that we *might* not want to, or the thought that we have moral duties.** Kant confirms this by comparing motivation by duty with other sorts of motives, in particular, with motives of self-interest, self-preservation, sympathy and happiness. He argues that a dutiful action from any of these motives, however praiseworthy it may be, does not express a good will. Assuming an action has moral worth only if it expresses a good will, such **[A]ctions have no** **‘moral worth’ [if] conformity of one’s action to duty in such cases is only related by accident to content of one’s will. For instance, if one is motivated by happiness alone, then had conditions not conspired to align one’s duty with one’s happiness, one would not have done one’s duty. By contrast, were one to supplant any of these motivations with the motive of duty, the morality of the action would then express one’s determination to act dutifully under any circumstances. Only then would the action have moral worth. [[3]](#footnote-4)**

Kant furthers:  **Moderation in the affections and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation** are not only good in many respects, but even seem to constitute part of the intrinsic worth of the person; but they **are far from deserving to be called good without qualification**, although they have been so unconditionally praised by the ancients. **For without the principles of a good will, they may become extremely bad, and the coolness of a villain** not only **makes him far more dangerous**, but also directly makes him more abominable in our eyes than he would have been without it. **A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination, nay even of the sum total of all inclinations.[[4]](#footnote-5)**

To be *universally* and *absolutely* good, something must be good in *every instance* of its occurrence. Kant argues that all those things which people *call* "good" can become bad if the will to make use of them is not good. If we imagine a bad person (*i.e.* one who willed or wanted to do evil), who had all of these so-called "goods" (intelligence, wit, *etc*.), these very traits would make only that much worse his will to do what is wrong. (We would get the "criminal master-mind" of the comic books.) Even "*health*" often also cited as a "good in- itself" may serve to make a person *insensitive* and indifferent to the lack of good health in others.

* 1. Results are irrelevant to the resolution. McCord furthers: “**If a good will is unconditionally good then its value cannot depend upon its having good effects. For if its value did depend on its having good effects it would be valuable only on the condition that it had those effects. Take away the effects and you would take away the source of its value. Since its value is unconditional, it must then be valued even absent its having any good effects. Its value must be contained within it.”**  [[5]](#footnote-6)
  2. Thus to affirm I just have to prove that universal laws mandate that we have to provide health care but not necessarily achieve a particular end.

1. A maxim of non-beneficence cannot be universalized.
   1. It is irrational to will a world of universal non-beneficence because we are incapable of functioning as rational beings if we can’t meet our true needs. Because we can’t guarantee that we can reach these ends unaided AND we can’t forgo them, we have to will beneficence. Herman:

**Ends**, however, **that are necessary to sustain oneself as a rational being cannot** (on rational grounds) **be given up. Insofar as one has ends at all, one has already willed the continued exercise of one’s agency as a rational being.** **The ends which must be realized if a person is to function (or continue to function) as a rational, end-setting agent come from** what Kant calls **the “true needs” of human agents**. They are **the conditions of our “power to set an end” that is the “characteristic of humanity”. The ends set to meet our true needs are like all other ends—we cannot guarantee that we can realize them unaided. But in contrast to all other ends, we cannot, on rational grounds, forgo them.** Thus neither the wanton, nor any human agent, may permanently alienate what may be necessary to satisfy true needs. **Willing universal nonbeneficence thus conflicts with what**, as dependent rational beings, **we must will, if we will anything at all.** If we are asked to imagine a life independent of things to be used as means, we cannot do so, for our existence depends on them straightforwardly. **The adequacy of our skills to our needs is a contingent state of affairs.** The very bounty of nature and ease of life that might make us feel we will never have to place new demands on ourselves are not of our making or within our control. **Thus it would not be rational to freeze our skills if we could not also control our circumstances. This is parallel to the idea that** I mean to capture in saying that **unless one could guarantee in advance that one will not require the help of others as means to ends one could not forgo, it would not be rational to will universal nonbeneficence. It is a fact of our nature as rational beings that we can’t guarantee that we shall always be capable of realizing our ends unaided**, as it is a fact of our nature that we need things and skills to pursue our ends. If what we lack is some thing, we cannot call on that object to serve our need; nor can we obtain new skills and abilities at will. But we can call on the skills and resources of others to supplement our own. **The willing of a world of nonbeneficence conflicts with the practical consequences of the conditions of human rationality: the natural limitations of our powers as agents.** This does not involve questions of risk and so of prudence. The natural limits of our powers as agents set the conditions of rational willing within which prudential calculations are made. It is because these limits are not transcended by good fortune that considerations of risk and likelihood are not relevant. Because we are dependent rational beings with true needs, we are constrained to act in certain ways (toward ourselves and toward others). **Thus the argument to defeat the maxim of nonbeneficence goes through: the world of universal nonbeneficence is not a world that it is rational for any human agent to choose. And since differences among persons with regard to their neediness, strength, etcetera do not affect the argument; the duty of beneficence that emerges is of the same degree or stringency for all persons. [[6]](#footnote-7)**

* 1. Next, self-interest as a maxim would conflict with itself, so we have positive duties of beneficence towards humanity. Kant 2:

But beyond benevolence in our wishes for others (which costs us nothing) how can it be required as a duty that this should also be practical, that is, that **everyone who has the means to do so should be beneficent to those in need**? – Benevolence is satisfaction in the happiness (well-being) of others; but **beneficence is the maxim of being constrained by** his **reason to adopt this maxim as a universal law.** It is not obvious that any such law is to be found in reason. On the contrary, the maxim “Everyone for himself, God (fortune) for us all” seems to be the most natural one. **To be beneficent,** that is, **to promote according to one’s means the happiness of others in need, without hoping for something in return, is everyone’s duty. For everyone who finds himself in need wishes to be helped by others. But if he lets his maxim of being unwilling to assist others in turn when they are in need become**s public, that is, makes this **a universal** permissive **law, then everyone would likewise deny him assistance when he himself is in need**, or at least would be authorized to deny it. **Hence the maxim of self interest would conflict with itself it it were made a universal law,** that is, **it is contrary to duty. Consequently the maxim of common interest, of beneficence toward those in need, is a universal duty of human beings,** just **because they are to be considered fellowmen,** that is, **rational beings with needs**, united by nature in one dwelling place so that they can help one another.[[7]](#footnote-8)

The affirmative burden is to prove that denying universal health care wills a maxim of non-beneficence, and the negative burden is to prove that it doesn’t.

I contend that denying universal health care wills a maxim of non-beneficence.

Health care is defined by Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy as “forms of action intended to benefit or promote the good of other persons.” Non-beneficence encompasses all actions that are not beneficent and thus the denial of health care. It would be irrational to will a maxim of denying universal health care as followed by the categorical imperative; if everybody in the world were to deny everybody universal health care, everybody would be left with no health care at all, which would be undesirable and nonfunctional.

Even if you don’t buy that, the affirmative can still link to the standard. Goals of health care and beneficence are congruent; thus, in providing universal health care, one wills a maxim of beneficence. This means that the imperative of providing universal health care still becomes sufficient for a moral command. Consequently the denial of universal health care necessarily becomes a maxim of non-beneficence, and the affirmative still meets the burden.

So I affirm.

What people’s actual intentions are in the real world

1. Korsgaard, Christine “Fellow Creatures”

   *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values,* 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Johnson, Robert, "Kant's Moral Philosophy", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/kant-moral/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Johnson, Robert, "Kant's Moral Philosophy", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/kant-moral/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Kant, Immanuel, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals”, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals,* translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott URL = <http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/kant\_groundwork\_metaphysics\_morals01.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Kant’s *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals; A very brief selective summary of sections I and II © 2000* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. *Mutual Aid and Respect for Persons* Barbara Herman *Ethics* Vol. 94, No. 4 (Jul., 1984), pp. 577-602 Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ucpress) Article Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2380319 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Kant, Immanuel, “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals”, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals,* translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott URL = <http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/kant\_groundwork\_metaphysics\_morals01.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)