I affirm the resolution “The United States ought to guarantee universal health care for its citizens.”

To clarify the debate, I offer the following definitions:

1. **Ought** (Merriam-Webster): **used to express obligation**
2. **Guarantee** (Merriam-Webster): **an assurance for the fulfillment of a condition**
3. **Universal health care** (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th Edition): **A health insurance program that is financed by taxes and administered by the government to provide comprehensive health care that is accessible to all citizens of that nation**

I **value morality**, defined by Merriam-Webster to be of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior, because of the use of the word “ought,” used to imply moral obligation, in the resolution. Because it is immoral to stand by and watch people we could save suffer and die because they can’t afford health care, my **value criterion is protecting life**.

Vasil **Gluchman**, Presov University, *Humanity and Moral Rights*,

Furthermore, I recognize **the right of innocent persons for life is a basic human moral right.** However, there is also a strong version of that right, i.e., right of an innocent person to have a dignified life. In accordance with it there is the extending of the former right on the next, social and economic rights because only through them can we fulfill the dignified life of the innocent person.

On the one hand, it is essential to point out that **the basic charge of the state and its institutions is the protection of the innocent person's right to life.** On the other hand, **the state has to fulfill its claims for the dignified life.**

**It is the government’s obligation to provide universal health care for its citizens.**

[Ascension Health, America’s largest nonprofit Catholic health care provider network. “The Right to Health Care.” 2007.]

**The "right to health care" for all is not an optional stance. Rather, the right to health care is a human right founded on human dignity and the common good. Considered as such, health care is more than a commodity in so far as it is an essential safeguard of human life and dignity that ought to be provided for and to everyone. This absolute right to health care, however, should not be understood as an unlimited entitlement, but as a right that carries with it corresponding duties regarding justice, stewardship and the common good.**

# David Cecere, Harvard Science, New study finds 45,000 deaths annually linked to lack of health coverage, 2009.

**Nearly 45,000 annual deaths are associated with lack of health insurance, according to a new study published** online today **by the** [**American Journal of Public Health**](http://www.ajph.org/)**.** That figure is about two and a half times higher than an estimate from the [Institute of Medicine](http://www.iom.edu/) (IOM) in 2002. **The study, conducted at** [**Harvard Medical School**](http://harvardscience.harvard.edu/directory/programs/harvard-medical-school) **and** [**Cambridge Health Alliance**](http://www.cha.harvard.edu/)**, found that uninsured, working-age Americans have a 40 percent higher risk of death than their privately insured counterparts**, up from a 25 percent excess death rate found in 1993. “The uninsured have a higher risk of death when compared to the privately insured, **even after taking into account socioeconomics, health behaviors, and baseline health**,” said lead author **Andrew Wilper, M.D.**, who currently teaches at the [University of Washington School of Medicine](http://uwmedicine.washington.edu/). **[said] “We doctors have many new ways to prevent deaths from hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease — but only if patients can get into our offices and afford their medications.**”

Because health care is a right, it must be provided by the government. Also, because the right to life is a right the government must guarantee, and lack of health care leads to death, the government is even more obligated to provide health care, and thus the right to life, for its citizens.

**Contention 1: Health care is becoming increasingly hard for US citizens to afford.**

Dr. Kao-Ping **Chua**, MD is a male with 1 year of medical experience and practices in Pediatrics, AMSA. “The Case for Universal Health Care”

Over the last few decades, **the United States has witnessed skyrocketing health care costs.** **Health insurance premiums have been rising on average by** double-digit percentage points over the past five years, **a rate of increase that is 2-3 times the rate of inflation.**1 Because of these out-of-control health care costs, **there has been a steep rise in the number of uninsured Americans. Currently, more than 45 million Americans lack any form of health insurance, and millions more are “underinsured” – they have insurance but lack adequate financial protection from health care costs.**

**While this problem was formerly** a problem **confined to low-income Americans, more and more middle-class citizens are becoming directly affected by the problem.** In the face of rising health care costs, fewer employers are able to provide their workers with health insurance; **the percentage of employers offering health insurance dropped from 69% in 2000 to 60% in 2005. Even if employers are able to provide health insurance benefits, the trend is towards providing high-deductible insurance that covers an ever-shrinking percentage of health care costs.**1 The net result is that more and more employed middle-class Americans find themselves with low-quality or no access to health care.

**The erosion of employer-based coverage has been partially offset by increased enrollment in Medicaid,** which is designed to provide a safety-net for the lowest income Americans.2 **However, Medicaid has recently been the subject of relentless funding cuts by cash-strapped states and Congressional representatives who are ideologically opposed to welfare programs.** As the program continues to be slashed, it is certain that **Medicaid will not be able to offset the losses in employer-based insurance,** resulting in more and more uninsured individuals.

Health insecurity is at an all-time high. **In a time when thousands of people lose their health insurance every day, when health care is becoming elusive to even well-to-do Americans, and when any person is just one pink slip away from becoming uninsured, it becomes clear that health care for all is not just important to achieve, but imperative.**

Without government guaranteed universal health care, many citizens will lose their ability to access health care even if they could before. Everyone is at risk of losing this right, and the government needs to prevent that from happening to uphold its obligation to protect its citizens’ right to life.

**Contention 2: Universal health care could save the lives of many US citizens.**

**Chua 2**

**The uninsured are 3-4 times more likely than those with insurance to report problems getting needed medical care, even for serious conditions. In one study, more than half of the uninsured postponed needed medical care due to financial concerns, while over one third went without a physician-recommended medical test or treatment due to financial concerns.**

**The uninsured are less likely to get needed preventive care.** When compared to the insured, **uninsured, non-elderly adults are 50% less likely to receive preventive care such as pap smears, mammograms, blood pressure checks, sigmoidoscopies, cholesterol screening, and prostate exams.**

**The uninsured are more likely to be forced to delay medical services, affecting the timeline of diagnosis and thus the prognosis of the disease process.** In one study, the time to diagnosis of late-stage cancer was compared between uninsured and privately insured patients. **The uninsured patients were 1.7, 2.6, 1.4, and 1.5 times more likely to be diagnosed late for colorectal cancer, melanoma, breast cancer, and prostate cancer, respectively.**

**The uninsured are more likely to receive poor care for chronic diseases. Among non-elderly adult diabetics, a lack of insurance is associated with less glucose monitoring and fewer foot and eye exams, leading to an increased risk of hospitalization and disability. Uninsured individuals with end-stage renal disease are more likely to have progressed to a more advanced stage before beginning dialysis.**

In the end, **while all of these facts and figures are sobering, they cannot capture the true human dimension of the suffering caused by uninsurance.** To truly understand this dimension, one has merely to turn to the numerous horror stories in the media that portray the victims of America’s decision not to guarantee health care to all – the patients who are forced to decide between pills and food, the patients diagnosed with inoperable late-stage cancer after not receiving preventive care, and so on. The stories of these patients may seem like isolated anecdotes for some, but for the vast majority of Americans, these stories hit disturbingly close to home. The victims are friends, neighbors, and increasingly, family members.

Because those who are uninsured suffer much greater risks because lack of insurance makes it difficult for them to receive treatment, if they are provided with health care by the government, they can live much longer. The government should provide them with health care so they can do their best to maximize the lives of their citizens.

In conclusion, because health care is a right and thus something the government must provide, many people are lacking this right, and health care could save the lives of many US citizens, the United States ought to guarantee universal health care for its citizens.