

Indifference Toward Public Health and Welfare in America. The COVID-19 Healthcare Fiasco

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The US is the only developed nation without some form of universal healthcare coverage.

The world's richest country is indifferent toward the rights, needs, and welfare of its ordinary people in more normal times.

It's much the same at times like now. Economic collapse combined with spreading coronavirus outbreaks finds tens of millions of Americans with health insurance because they're out of work and it's unaffordable for low and many middle-income households.

US healthcare costs double or more the amount in other developed countries — because profits are prioritized over human health and welfare, combined lack of some form of universal coverage.

In 2018, official US data showed around 28 million Americans were uninsured.

The number of underinsured is off the charts because coverage the way it should be is unaffordable for most US households so they settle for what's inadequate or go uninsured.

Since taking office, the Trump regime took steps to undermine Obamacare marketplaces and Medicaid, including efforts to keep immigrants off its rolls.

America's poor and low-income are most vulnerable to lack coverage or enough of it to cover major expenses if arise, Blacks and Latinos most affected.

All of the above was pre-economic collapse/spreading COVID-19 outbreaks — things much worse now than over the past decade.

Since March, applications for unemployment benefits were processed for over 26 million laid off or furloughed US workers, millions more coming, their applications for help backlogged.

By late May or June, around 47 million Americans may be laid off, many losing healthcare coverage along with income.

Shadowstats economist John Williams believes US unemployment could surge to 43% because "secondary furloughs are on the rise."

Dr. Margaret Flowers is a Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) national board adviser, a staunch advocate of Medicare for all.

At times like now when public duress is at a fever pitch because of rising unemployment,

causing loss of income, coupled with loss of healthcare coverage for millions, the need is greater for universal coverage than any time since the 1930s Great Depression.

The world's richest country and Wall Street owned Fed handed trillions of dollars in free money to bankers and other politically-connected corporate interests.

Ordinary Americans got peanuts, notably no help to deal with healthcare issues at a time of economic collapse with growing millions out of work and largely on their own to get by.

Flowers noted that even before the current dual crises emerged, the US "had the highest number of preventable deaths compared to other wealthy nations and a declining life expectancy."

The leading cause of personal bankruptcies in the US is over inability to pay exorbitant healthcare costs that are rising much faster annually than average personal income.

By June, Flowers estimates the number of Americans without healthcare insurance will increase by over 13 million.

In early April, an analysis by PNHP co-founders Dr. Steffie Woolhandler and Dr. David Himmelstein highlighted a growing lack of healthcare coverage in the US nationwide because of a surge in unemployment.

US legislation enacted into law covers COVID-19 testing, not treatment for any illnesses, "no new healthcare insurance subsidies or coverage."

Growing numbers of uninsured individuals exclude affected family members, raising official numbers much higher with them included.

Residents of states that rejected Medicaid expansion are most likely to lack coverage at a time when it's most needed.

When employed, most Americans live from paycheck to paycheck with scant savings or none at all.

They're unprepared to deal with what's happening in real time. For lack of income and health insurance, they're most likely to skip doctor visits and medications, greatly endangering themselves if illness becomes more serious.

At times like now, the urgency for universal coverage is self-evident — government sponsored, not connected to employment that in the best of times is way inadequate for most people.

At times like now, it's gone for growing millions of unemployed and too expensive for many others.

Food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare are fundamental human rights.

Woolhandler and Himmelstein quoted economist and health research policy expert Victor Fuchs a decade ago saying:

"National health insurance will probably come to the United States after a major change in

the political climate—the kind of change that often accompanies a war, a depression, or large-scale civil unrest.”

The time is now in the form economic duress that may be more severe for countless millions of Americans than any time since the 1930s.

Back then, vital social programs were established to get people back to work and help the unemployed.

Today, government under both right wings of the one-party state serves privileged interests exclusively at the expense of most others — a let ‘em eat cake agenda.

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