

HEALTHCARE ISSUES FOR HOMELESS AND MENTALLY ILL

Stephanie Vischer

In order for the country to significantly decrease the homeless population, more treatment centers for the mentally ill and substance abusers need to be set up so that more homeless people are willing to participate. Many homeless people do not want to be treated because of policies made that they have to abide by. "Participants wanted to work and to be housed, yet felt trapped in a dehumanizing system," (Daiski, 1). In order for more homeless people to participate, some things need to change in the system. Things that could change could be as simple as only requiring participants to stay a certain number of times per week, like in The Soloist where Nathaniel, a schizophrenic, was only required to stay in the center three times a week. Eventually he makes the place his own and stays there nightly (Lopez, 188).

Chronically homeless people have the streets as their home where they do not have any rules to obey. When the homeless go into a place that they do not call home and many rules and obligations are thrown at them, they become scared or rebellious and can be thrown out of the treatment program. Being thrown out of treatment puts the homeless back out onto the streets. Treatment centers are supposed to help get the homeless back on their feet and back to what society considers a normal life. Homelessness cannot change overnight and neither can a treatment center's rules and guidelines. Over time these two things can change if treatment centers tweak the rules a little bit so that homeless people do not feel "dehumanized" and completely overwhelmed. When treatment centers change, the population of homeless people will drop dramatically and stay that way.

Emily Gilbert

The main argument of this paper is that universal healthcare in the United States can, despite popular belief, be more beneficial to the country as a whole than the current system. The universal plan would be cheaper for all involved since, the expenses of the hospital, which are usually paid by the few insured people, will be spread out to many. This means that each person pays only a little extra and everyone is covered. In being a proponent of universal healthcare there will be an in depth look at the countries who are already implementing this system, such as The Netherlands and Germany, and seeing how these systems can be used to create an effective plan for the United States. The main goal is to persuade and gain new view points on the solution from others during the discussion to come up with what is believed to be the best solution.

Joe Sullivan

Soup kitchens and shelters; are those the best things we can do? For decades the plague of homelessness has stared us in the face, and all we've done is smile back and say, "Here's some soup and a place to stay for the night." The problem is that we just keep adding fuel to the fire; we provide the homeless with some food and a place to stay for a little while. Many of them don't see why they should change their ways. While people sit in their warm houses after handing out some bread to the man they saw holding a cardboard sign earlier, that man is just waiting for his next piece of bread. What people should really do is provide a more permanent solution to the problem; something that will keep the homeless man off of the streets and in a stable job and, hopefully, a home. The problem with doing something like that is that we are already set in our ways. Much like the homeless man, we can't see why we need to change our methods. Why should we? It's what we've been doing for years, and the homeless people have food so we're doing okay...right? No. They need more help than what a piece of bread and a bowl of soup can offer.

Many victims of homelessness suffer mental issues that require help from a professional. Many others don't even know how to get on the road to recovery. Then there are those who are simply happy with things the way they are; they like how they are living and do not want to change their lifestyles. Helping the homeless is not a simple problem that can be solved overnight. How will this problem be solved? What steps are being taken to

help? Who is trying to help them? How are issues such as mental illness being handled? Are things getting better? These are the questions that need to be answered if the plague of homelessness can ever be purged from our nation.

Alannah Rice

The question for the town hall meeting that I would like to address is this: is homelessness preventable, and if so, what actions can we take to ensure an end?

So far I have learned from *Million Dollar Murray*, and several other organizations websites that it would be less expensive to fix the homeless problem than it is to manage it. I think it is important to discuss the ideas that students have regarding preventing homelessness. It seems that there are no current prevention programs, and the only way to come up with something is to brainstorm.

I think that we need to discuss ways in which the homeless could be encouraged to come off the street, even the ones who are very reluctant. I would like people to get creative with their ideas, and possibly discuss things that have not been suggested. You never know what you will get from a room full of new ideas.

Questions to be asked on this subject can't really be planned out, but will most likely be formed as the discussion progresses and people's ideas get flowing.

Ally Jackson

Are the homeless receiving the health care that they need? Why do so many homeless people (particularly chronically homeless people) refuse health care? Who is receiving the most attention in health care facilities and why? These are just a few of the questions that I am researching. I want to know what kind of health care is available for people who are homeless, especially those who can't afford it. What do we do about the homeless people who are costing our country millions of dollars in hospital bills? What is the solution to the ongoing battle of health care for the homeless? Perhaps one of the biggest and toughest questions to answer is whether or not it is right for a homeless person to repeatedly rack up thousands of dollars in medical bills, while a family who is barely affording to live can't receive healthcare. This question brings up morality as well as policy issues that I would like to discuss in detail.

Some of these questions I have already found some answers to, while other are still unanswered. I started looking into reasons why homeless people reject help from doctors or psychiatrists. I discovered that quite a few homeless people have reported having bad experiences with health care providers, tainting their view of health care in general. A study was conducted two years ago on the perceptions of welcomeness and unwelcomeness among homeless people in healthcare facilities. Reportedly, 13 of the 17 people who participated in the study described bad experiences with health care providers. These men and women reported feeling discriminated against and felt that the doctors or nurses cared little about their well-being. These are some of the questions and research that I am digging into.

Aria Schultz

The topic that I hope to discuss is health care for the homeless community. More specifically I would enjoy conversing with my fellow peers and esteemed professionals about Music Therapy. This form of healthcare has improved the quality of life for many people. Music Therapy combines the skill of healing with that of tune. It is an interesting profession that requires both logic and creativity.

Music Therapy can be useful for people struggling with various diseases. Alzheimer's is one such disease that can be controlled using Music Therapy. Through the use of songs that are relatable and a part of a patient's past, Music Therapy can significantly slow the process of dementia.

Music Therapy can be helpful for those struggling with depression as well. Music can manipulate human emotions. Songs with a faster beat can increase concentration levels by stimulating the brain. A slower tempo can calm, creating a slower heartbeat and breath pattern. When a Music Therapist effectively uses this knowledge, patients struggling with depression are noticeably helped.

There are a number of reasons that a person could become homeless. One reason might be dementia or mental illness. Many homeless struggle with severe depression. Music Therapy has proven to help heal both. If this form of Therapy were to be incorporated into a plan to aid the homeless, I feel that the epidemic of homeless and hopeless people would be greatly decreased.