Module 8 Activity 3 Exploring Conflicting Ideas

The 2 important conflicting ideas I am focused on are publicly funded verses privately funded health care.

There is a conflict between those of privilege who can access the best health care regardless of cost and those who can’t.

It is my belief that neither system will sufficiently meet the health care needs of all its citizens and perhaps it is time to look at a 2-tiered system that comprises of both a publicly and privately funded model working in tandem.

Elaborate: Canadian health care was built on a publicly funded model. The premise of this model is that health care is accessible to all. But one only has to look at the growing health care crisis to see that this is no longer true.

Exemplify: Consider that currently in Canada 1 in 5 Canadians is without a primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner). In some provinces these numbers are even worse, with up to 31% lacking a primary health care provider. Also consider that many Emergency departments across the country have wait times as high as 22 hours. You will often find patients admitted to units where there only room is a stretcher in the hallway. There are many ways to bypass this crisis but only for those who can afford to do so. Those with the financial resources can travel to other countries or access the growing private care services options available in Canada. And those without the financial, educational or social resources of the more privileged are often falling through the cracks of the health care system, if they are even able to access it in the first place.

Illustrate: To illustrate consider 2 people who need a knee replacement. One has the financial resources to travel to another country and pay for that surgery immediately, bypassing the growing wait times throughout each province of Canada. The second patient does not have the financial means to privately pay for the surgery and must wait until such surgery can be planned, leading to decreased overall well-being. Consider that while waiting, they may need to take time off work and are further financially disadvantaged.

A reasonable argument against a 2-tiered system is that those of financial means will still have better health care. A privately funded model that only those of financial means could access would draw the best health care providers from the publicly funded model putting health care for those without the means to access private health care in more dire straits then they already are.

I agree that there are potential consequences of a 2-tiered system that could see an even greater disadvantage for those who are already at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing health care. But the current system isn’t working and all possible solutions should be considered.