

Health Care and Human Rights

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Source: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

‘Access to health care should be a right for all people.’

Consider Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the resources below. Work with a partner to answer the following questions. Be prepared to justify your response.

1. To what extent do you believe Article 25 is true? What are you using to support your decision?
2. Are there any people who would disagree with you?
3. What personal experience do you have of this issue? What is access to health care like in your local area?
4. How could the issue of poor access to health care be improved in:
 - a) an area of need in a developing country?
 - b) your local area?

‘For the people living in the rural areas of Western Kenya, there are major obstacles to access to health care. Although several government run hospitals do exist in the Western Province, they are not adequately equipped to handle the needs of the people. The two major problems are related to the shortage of health care professionals and the access to medications due to both availability and financial restrictions. By establishing a health clinic in Kabula, Kenya, we hope to alleviate some of these problems. From our first hand experiences we have seen unsuccessful development projects that failed due to the donor organizations’ unwillingness to work with the local people. Therefore, to promote sustainable development, we will assist the current infrastructure by working hand in hand with the local health care providers in a mutually beneficial exchange. By working in a non-imposing manner, the clinic will be maintained by the local health care providers even in the absence of members from the donor organization.

In the United States, there exist 341 people per doctor, while in the West African nation of Burkina Faso, there are an astounding 57,310 people per doctor. The number of human beings per doctor can serve as a general indicator of access to health care in any given country. Therefore, by examining this figure, one can locate the countries in the world that are the most disadvantaged with respect to access to health care. It deserves mentioning that these figures are averages, meaning that in many rural areas throughout Africa and other developing countries there may be over 100,000 people per doctor.’

Country	Region	People per Physician
Burkino Faso	W Africa	57310
Ethiopia	E Africa	32500
Cambodia	SE Asia	27000
Tanzania	E Africa	24970
Nepal	NW Asia	16830
Kenya	E Africa	10150
Philippines	SE Asia	8120
Jamaica	C America	6159
India	NW Asia	2460
Honduras	C America	3090
Bolivia	S America	2124
United States	N America	341