

PCH 358 – Health Policy
Spring 2018
Final Assignment –OP-ED
Draft due 4/17/18, final version due 5/8/18

Write an OP-ED taking a position on any of the topics below. First, research OP-ED policies and customs (length, audience, tone, format, etc.) of the publication. Consider your point(s) and include some support (statistic, another credible source, a common sense consequence, etc.) for each point. Your case will be stronger if you acknowledge the opposite argument and refute it. Cite appropriately for the format. Do not simply make a statement and expect the reader to just believe you – make the case and back it up with research. Analogies can be very effective in explaining complex concepts. Anticipate an opponent’s positions and address them.

The op-ed should be **about 800 words**. Remember that your audience is the general public; jargon and clinical terms must be explained.

You must **include a headline for your op-ed**. Re-stating the question is not a headline. Be sure to make clear in both the headline and the first paragraph what your position on the question is. People will not read into a document if you don’t catch their attention early.

State which publication you are submitting to and provide a link to op-eds in that publication.

For a start, look at http://www.cthealthpolicy.org/toolbox/opinion/op_eds_letters.htm

Questions to consider:

Is an individual mandate, a requirement that everyone buy health insurance, the best way to get everyone covered? Could it backfire?

Should the state allow hospitals or other organizations to pay organ donors?

Should treatments that are not essential to health, like infertility or elective plastic surgery, be covered by health insurance and Medicaid?

Is profit in health care appropriate? Does it help or hurt?

Should the state pass a law to allow doctors to assist patients in committing suicide?

Is it appropriate for a doctor to take gifts, lunches, trips, etc. from drug companies? Should the state outlaw the practice, require drug companies to report the gifts and create a public registry of gifts, or do nothing?

Should pregnant women who continue to drink alcohol be locked up by the state to protect the baby?

Should a doctor who knows or should have known that a patient was being abused, be punished by the state for not reporting the abuse? What if the patient asks him/her not to?

Is offering concierge medical services to some patients in a practice, who pay more for the service, appropriate? Should the state prohibit the practice, refuse to allow concierge practices to participate in government coverage programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid and the state employee plan, or do nothing?

Is it appropriate for a doctor to prescribe a medication for an off-label use before it has been tested for safety in that population for that use? What if it shows anecdotal promise? What if there are no other standard treatments available for the patient? Should government take action such as prohibiting or penalizing off-label prescribing, require patients be informed when prescribed an off-label medication?

Should the state allow some people to refuse immunizations?

Rubric – 12.5 pts each for both the draft and final versions

- Grammar, language, length, clearly written for general audience ---30%
- Limited number of points – 20%
- Well-reasoned perspective, with just enough facts to support –30%
- Anticipates and addresses opponent's position – 20%