The Justice Emmett Hall Memorial Foundation

Winners of the 2015 Jack Boan Student Essay Awards

Undergraduate Student Essay

Name: **Andrea Crowe**

Program: Bachelor of Nursing – Collaborative Nursing Program

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador School of Nursing

Essay Title: ***Access to physician assisted suicide: A right for all Canadians***

Abstract:

On February 6th, 2015 The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favor of physician assisted suicide (PAS) paving the way for it to become legal in Canada (Carter v Canada, 2015). PAS is similar but also different than euthanasia and is supported by the majority of Canadians (Dying with Dignity, 2014). According to the principals of the Canada Health Act (CHA), all Canadians should have reasonable access to medically necessary, publically funded health care services (1985), but this is currently not the case for PAS. Reasonable access to PAS will now require health services and policy changes at multiple levels of government and changes within the education of Canadian health care professionals. This paper will focus on how these changes to health services and policies are supported by the CHA and how it will impact health care professionals, in particular the nursing profession. The Supreme Court ruling and the lack of access to PAS in Canada will be discussed as well as the required changes to the role of physicians, psychologists, pharmacists and nurses as PAS services become more accessible to all Canadians.

Master's Student Essay

Name: **K. Suzanne Maginley**

Program: School of Population and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine

University of British Columbia

Essay Title: ***Medeo: The cure for inequitable access to primary health care in Canada?***

Abstract:

The field of telemedicine in Canada is rapidly evolving, keeping pace with cutting-edge advances in modern technology. In Canada, British Columbia (BC) is recognized as a national leader in telemedicine services, and has received considerable attention for revolutionizing the delivery of virtual health care. At present, BC is the only province that allows third-party telemedicine services to operate outside of

designated hospitals and clinics. One Vancouver-based third-party service, Medeo, recently developed a software-based platform that allows patients and physicians to connect with one another using their own smartphones, tablets, or computers. Accessibility of medically necessary care for all Canadians is one of five fundamental principles enshrined in the *Canada Health Act*. With the advent of new technologies like Medeo, we can not only improve the quality and efficiency of virtual health care delivery in Canada, but can potentially eliminate existing physical barriers to accessing publicly funded health services for all Canadians. The rapid expansion of Medeo and other service providers has made it difficult to properly evaluate the potential challenges that may accompany this new era of telemedicine in BC. Future research on the implications of BC's progressive approach to telemedicine will be instrumental to informing legislation, health policy, and delivery of health services relating to the virtualization of primary care in Canada.

Doctoral Student Essay

Name: **Colleen A. Hanrahan**

Program: Public Policy and Public Administration Program

Walden University, Minneapolis, Minn., USA

Essay Title: ***A forgotten population in our Canadian health care system***

Abstract:

The Canada Health Act serves as the basis of our universal health care system. Founded on five key principles, the provisions of the statute extend to all Canadian residents. However, prison health care services are provided under the authority and budget of the prison administration. Thus, prison health services are not tied to satisfying the principles of the Canada Health Act. Prison populations are increasing, as is the proportion of prisoners who have mental illnesses. Further, prisoners have poorer health than the general population. Prisons have not been provided with adequate resources to provide health services, including mental health services. International human rights law provides that prisoners are entitled to have access to health services as they would in the community, however, this may narrowly construed. If equivalence was viewed as being consistent with the right to health, a right extended under the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, health services should be available, accessible, acceptable, and of good quality. Through a case study approach, mental health services of a provincial prison (APP) were viewed using the right to health framework. While services were available they were under resourced, and delivered under prison administrators, not health administrators using health standards. If prison health services were to become the responsibility of the health care system, there would likely be more alignment with the right to health framework, and greater likelihood of providing health services as contemplated under the Canada Health Act, specifically, comprehensiveness, universality, and accessibility.