

Medical Care for the Indigent In USA

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I have always wondered about this and have had some lengthy discussions in the past with people in the county social services dept regarding such topics as Medicaid and Welfare (I live in Maryland, USA). It is nasty stuff and if you make any kind of income at all, you are basically not eligible.

But barring that, I would like to propose a hypothetical question about caring for the indigent (which includes the whole gamut of people from the poor who may have a modest home or apartment, or live with a relative or friend, etc, – down to the homeless person who sleeps on a manhole cover. And say none of them have health insurance, or Medicaid or Welfare (I believe in most states if you are eligible for Welfare, you automatically get Medicaid).

I would like to exaggerate a point to make a point. Lets take a very well to do person like the former actor Chris Reeves, who had a terrible horse accident and became a quadriplegic. Chris went through hell for several years before he finally succumbed, and he had the very best medical care available, and I am sure the medical bills (including therapy) were in the millions.

Now lets take the homeless person on the street, who for whatever strange reason suddenly becomes a quadriplegic. What will happen to him and how will the "authorities to be" treat him. Even if he immediately becomes eligible for Medicaid, he will obviously not get the elite medical attention that Chris Reeves got (and could afford to pay for with or without insurance). So what will the state or county do with him, and to what extent will they try to keep him alive, and for how long. I don't think it is practical to assume the authorities can just let him up and die, but I am not totally sure about that. I hope you all get the just of my post. In a nutshell what will they do with him and what level of care will he get, versus the elite care that Chris Reeves got (and was able to pay for).

Pete