

Arsht Research on Ethics and Community Grant

Freedom from Discrimination and the Right to Health: Assessing Health Care Workers' Attitudes toward Marginalized Populations

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Abstract

The International Bill Rights grants the right to health without discrimination of any kind. These rights are thereby promised to the homeless and to prisoner populations in addition to all other humans. Multiple studies show discriminatory attitudes in health care based on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status and how these attitudes may affect the standard of care given to certain populations; however, there are few if any studies to depict health care workers attitudes toward the homeless and toward prisoner populations, two groups that historically face much discrimination.

This study aims to assess such attitudes in public and private hospital facilities in order to determine whether or not health care workers have biases toward the aforementioned marginalized populations. Personal interviews as well as electronic surveys of health care providers will be conducted to ascertain demographic information (age, gender, race, ethnicity, public versus private hospital, urban versus rural population served) and those relating to the provider's views on and experiences with prisoners, the homeless, and equality of care. The data will be compiled and analyzed to expose any prejudices if they exist.

If negative attitudes are uncovered by this study, the information gained in this endeavor can be used as the basis for further studies to determine whether or not such biases affect the quality of health care delivered to individuals in the homeless and prison populations.

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