

Rising Individual Responsibility in Healthcare: A Case Study of China

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Abstract : Although great achievements have been made since the beginning of the Chinese healthcare system reform in 1978, there still remain unresolved problems. Currently, the two leading social issues are accessibility and affordability of healthcare. Facing those challenges, Chinese government initiated the third round of healthcare system reform, accompanied by an array of measures. The newly launched strategies show a tendency to deliver healthcare as welfare goods, achieving equality through an ex-post perspective instead of an ex-ante view. However, if the reform efforts rely solely on the notion of “welfare”, the wrong idea of the government as the only duty-bearer in healthcare will arise. Several major threats, such as high costs as a result of inefficiencies and free riding then become imminent. Therefore, on the basis of Dworkin’s theory, this paper argues that individual responsibility should be introduced when constructing a sustainable healthcare system. And it should be equally highlighted as the duties of government. Furthermore, the notion of individual responsibility is believed to be necessary for promoting the justice of a healthcare system.

Keywords : Chinese healthcare system reform, individual responsibility, right to healthcare, social justice

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