

Lesson 1: Introduction to the U.S. Healthcare System

Scenario

Maria is a 45-year-old single mother who works full-time at a small business. One evening she begins experiencing severe stomach pain and goes to the nearest emergency room. When she checks in, the hospital staff ask if she has insurance. Maria explains that her job does not provide health insurance and she cannot afford a private plan. The hospital treats her, but she later receives a \$7,000 bill in the mail.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why did Maria receive such a large bill even though she went to a hospital?
2. How might Maria's experience be different if she had private insurance? Medicare? Medicaid?
3. Do you think everyone should be guaranteed healthcare, or should it depend on ability to pay? Explain your reasoning.
4. What are some possible strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. healthcare system shown in this scenario?

Reflection

If you were Maria, what would you want to change about the healthcare system?
