



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

FUNDING PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS TO PREVENT DISABILITY

Social knowledge generated by the public should serve the public's health

A forum was held at the Center for American Progress to discuss a book, "Unjust Deserts" that addressed unequal benefits to members of society of the inheritance of social knowledge. The forum was attended by economists and public policy experts.

Summary

Federal, State and local public health programs are, for the most part, generated from tax revenues. Arguments of who should be taxed and for how much remain a central issue in development of tax policies. One recent aspect of tax policy has been a tax on social knowledge. As people have solved problems with social knowledge, there has been accumulation of information which plays a central role in economic growth and is responsible for real income gains. This stock of knowledge is a social inheritance, nurtured by government, institutions and culture that have been created by many generations of people. This social inheritance of knowledge now flows to the top of a new aristocracy that drains resources from the well-being of the general public. The highly socialized inheritance of knowledge has also spawned huge discrepancies in the value placed on labor. The Aristotle axiom of "no mans labor is worth more than 5 times another's" has been exaggerate. Some lawyers and physicians bill clients at \$700 an hour more than 100 times the minimum wage

Disability Prevention Issues

The discrepancy of inheritance of knowledge utilized by a top aristocracy should be shared by society at large through the tax code. There are 60 million people who live in poverty, if the European standard of poverty is applied. In addition, there are 54 million people with disability in the U.S., 47 million people without health insurance, and 50 million who are food insecure. These impoverished conditions of many Americans result in the U.S. 46th, by world standards, on the measure of life expectancy and 42nd in infant mortality. These less than adequate human conditions of many people who live in America are, in part due to a dysfunctional public health system. Redistribution of the estimated 90% of economic resources from inherited social knowledge should be considered in formulation of tax policy to promote effective public health to prevent diminished health and disability.

Activity

A letter was written and post-forum discussions were held with the author of the “social knowledge” book to comment on distribution of the resources generated by the creation of social knowledge to improve the public’s health.

Principle

There should be redistribution of economic resources from inherited social knowledge through tax policy to promote effective public health to prevent diminished health and disability.