



Abstract:

From Theory to Practice: The Promise of Primary Care in New Zealand

By Amy Downs

While New Zealand and the United States have very different health care systems, health policy in both countries is highly controversial. The differing systems have evolved based on the two countries' respective history and values.

Controversial health policy debates in the US centre on the role of government versus the private market in solving complex issues. The highly politicised arguments over repealing the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare underscore policymakers' ambivalence regarding the extent to which healthy Americans should subsidise those who are unwell. The debate highlights Americans' disagreement regarding who is deserving of tax-payer funded services. This dispute over who is deserving extends beyond health policy and is central to many political conflicts in the US.

New Zealand's health policy disagreements focus more on fairness. This reflects the country's political history which emphasises universalism and addressing inequities. While policymakers generally agree on the principles of universal health access, disagreements exist regarding the appropriate levels of funding and policy implementation issues. In addition, a high priority for New Zealand is understanding ways to maximise taxpayers' investments in health and other sectors.

Amy's presentation will highlight the key health policy questions and challenges faced by policymakers in New Zealand and the United States. She will underscore how these questions reflect broader differences in the two countries' political and cultural values.