Social critic assaults health care programs

By Ken Vaca

Ivan Illich, author of Deschooling Society, spoke Monday afternoon on "Social Control and the Characters of Industrial Production." Illich is best known for his criticism of education and the institutionalization of schools.

The topic of his talk centered around the disastrous condition of health care in the United States. Illich began by attacking the medical profession and the institutionalization of health care programs. Illich said that "we must take health out of the hands of the doctors like the reformers of the eighteenth century took the hands of scribes... The medical insurance-drug complex promotes a death-dealing absence...." Our first step is to make people accept death and realize that medicine cannot avoid mortality rates. "Why should one only care for the sick and dying if one must pay for putting them there?" He further explained that medical prolongation of deadly sickness increases suffering and takes great resources. He foresees a growth in the area of health; once it is agreed that health production is a good thing, one cannot have enough of it.

Some specific ideas for improvement of health care which Illich tossed out were removal of the medical record, and that medical prolongation of life to a certain degree under attack. He also put forth four elements of deinstitutionalization: production, the elimination of health care programs, and thepension of the hands of scribes... The medical insurance-drug complex promotes a death-dealing absence...." Our first step is to make people accept death and realize that medicine cannot avoid mortality rates. "Why should one only care for the sick and dying if one must pay for putting them there?" He further explained that medical prolongation of deadly sickness increases suffering and takes great resources. He foresees a growth in the area of health; once it is agreed that health production is a good thing, one cannot have enough of it.

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