

Read the paragraph. Which system is this paragraph about?

- A) Free or public healthcare
- B) Private healthcare
- C) A mixed system

There are several systems within this model, but they all aim to provide free basic healthcare. In some countries, consultations, treatment and medicines are free to all citizens. This may be paid for directly by the government, perhaps funded by the country's valuable natural resources which the government owns. Other countries collect money from citizens through taxes based on their income. Workers pay according to how much they earn and employers also make a contribution. Hospitals and other medical services are then provided and run by the government. There may also be some private medical services that people can choose to buy. The advantage of systems such as these is clear: free basic healthcare for all, regardless of income. However, it is a very expensive system and, as life expectancy and costs rise, many countries are facing either an unsustainable financial burden, or a drop in the quality of services and facilities provided.

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In the private model, healthcare is only available to patients who pay for it and healthcare providers are commercial companies. In wealthier countries, most citizens take out health insurance to cover their potential medical costs. However, not everyone can afford this, and some governments have a scheme which gives financial assistance to those who need urgent medical care but are unable to afford it. In other nations, there is no such safety net, and those who cannot pay simply do not get the healthcare they need, unless they can get help. The disadvantages of this system are obvious: not only are individuals deprived of the medical attention they need, but also the lack of preventative medicine means that infectious diseases can quickly spread. One advantage, however, is that a higher quality of care provision can sometimes be maintained by commercial organizations than by struggling government-funded ones.

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In many countries, there is a mix of public and private funding. This system requires all its citizens to take out health insurance. This is deducted from salaries by the employer, who also has to make a contribution for each worker. Citizens are able to choose their healthcare providers, which may be public or private. However, in some systems, private companies are not permitted to make a profit from providing basic healthcare. This model provides more flexibility than either the public or private models, and ensures access to healthcare for all. However, it has been criticized for driving up labour costs, which can lead to unemployment.